Illinois U Library

A Quarterly of New Literature

ACCENT

BERTOLT BRECHT: Puntila

IRVIN STOCK: Mann's 'The Holy Sinner'

ISABEL BAYLEY:
The Great White Owl

PARKER TYLER:
Hymn to Apollo: 1954

DAVID W. EVANS: Eliot and the Sense of the Occult

JAMES HAFLEY: Virginia Woolf's Diary

WILLIAM JAY SMITH
GERHARD NELLHAUS
DAVID MELVIN PAUL

RALPH ROBIN
RICHARD F. HUGO
PETER HANKE

40 CENTS

SPRING 1954

THE LITERARY ESSAYS OF Ezra Pound

This selection by T. S. Eliot brings together for the first time Pound's most significant critical writings. The choices strikingly emphasize the objectives of Pound's criticism, which Mr. Eliot calls in his introduction "the refreshment, revitalization and 'making new' of literature in our own time." $6.00

BOUVARD AND PECUCHET Gustave Flaubert

Flaubert's last novel, a giant comedy of ideas, has come to be regarded in France as a great modern epic. This translation by T. W. Earp and G. W. Stonier deftly recreates the idiomatic and cliche-ridden French which had frightened away other translators; and the introduction by Lionel Trilling is a subtle guide to the novel's delights and truth. $3.75

THE DICTIONARY OF ACCEPTED IDEAS Gustave Flaubert

As a challenge and amusement Jacques Barzun has spent some years perfecting this adaptation of Flaubert's delicious but previously untranslatable collection of bromides and "inevitable phrases." With BOUVARD AND PECUCHET, for which it was a source, the DICTIONARY here becomes a merciless documentation of modern philistine stupidity. $2.00

NEW DIRECTIONS 333 Sixth Avenue • New York 14

CONTENTS

Isabel Bayley: *The Great White Owl* 83

Irvin Stock: *Mann's Christian Parable: A View of 'The Holy Sinner'* 98

Richard F. Hugo: *West Marginal Way* 115

Parker Tyler: *Hymn to Apollo: 1954* 116

William Jay Smith: *Don Giovanni in Campagna* 118
A Pavane for the Nursery 119

Ralph Robin: *Two Lives* 120

Peter Hanke: *The Exhibition* 120

David Melvin Paul: *In Dream of Heights* 121

Gerhard Nellhaus: *Introductory Notes on Brecht's 'Puntila'* 122

Bertolt Brecht: *Puntila* (translated by Gerhard Nellhaus and Richard Grenier):
Episode VIII — *Puntila Gives His Daughter's Hand to a Human Being* 124
Episode IX — *Puntila and Matti Climb Mt. Hatelma* 138

David W. Evans: *T. S. Eliot, Charles Williams, and the Sense of the Occult* 148

James Hafley: *A Message for the Hounds* (review of *A Writer's Diary* by Virginia Woolf) 156

EDITORIAL STAFF: Kerker Quinn, Charles Shattuck, George Scouffas, Allen Hayman, Roberta Scouffas, Walter Edens, David Joel, Oliver Rice, Stanley Elkin. Non-resident: Robert Bauer, Donald Hill, Carl Hartman. Secretarial assistant: Ruby Mason.

ACCENT: Box 102, University Station, Urbana, Illinois. Published quarterly under the auspices of the Department of English of the University of Illinois. Subscriptions: $1.50 for one year, $2.50 for two years in the United States (elsewhere $1.75 for one year, $2.75 for two years). Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes. Entered as second-class matter Sept. 26, 1940, at the post office at Urbana, Illinois, under the act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1954, by ACCENT.

Combination Offers

'Language as Gesture'

By R. P. Blackmur. Twenty-one essays in the craft and elucidation of modern poetry, including eight not previously published in book form.

Published Price, $5.75 . . . . . With one year of Accent ($1.50): $6.00

'The Days Before'

By Katherine Anne Porter. Her first collection of non-fiction writing—under three general headings: 'Mexican,' 'Personal and Particular' and 'Critical.'

Published price, $4.25 . . . . . With one year of Accent ($1.50): $4.50

'Rimbaud's Illuminations'

By Wallace Fowlie. A detailed analysis of the poems, supplemented by the French text and a new translation.

Published price, $4.00 . . . . . With one year of Accent ($1.50): $4.25

'Poetry and the Age'

By Randall Jarrell. Essays on Whitman, Frost, Ransom, Stevens, Corbiere, Marianne Moore, Williams, Lowell, etc. Delmore Schwartz has called it 'perhaps the most comprehensive and certainly the most detailed of all studies of modern poetry.'

Published price, $4.00 . . . . . With one year of Accent ($1.50): $4.25

'The Collected Poems of Dylan Thomas'

Containing all the poetry, from 1934 to 1953, which he wished to preserve.

Published price, $3.75 . . . . . With one year of Accent ($1.50): $4.00

'Brother to Dragons'

By Robert Penn Warren. 'A Tale in Verse and Voices'—the most distinguished book-length poem in recent years.

Published price, $3.50 . . . . . With one year of Accent ($1.50): $3.75

'Under Milk Wood'

By Dylan Thomas. The complete text. Preface by Daniel Jones.

Published price, $3.00 . . . . . With one year of Accent ($1.50): $3.50

A 'New Classics' edition

Select one of the following: (a) 'Paterson'—Books I-IV, by W. C. Williams; (b) 'ABC of Reading' by Ezra Pound; (c) 'Under Western Eyes' by Joseph Conrad; (d) 'Miss Lonelyhearts' by Nathanael West.

Published price, $1.75 . . . . . With one year of Accent ($1.50): $2.50

(If you are already a subscriber, you may still order from the above list, requesting that the subscription be sent to a friend, or extending your own subscription.)

ACCENT
A QUARTERLY OF NEW LITERATURE
Volume XIV, Number 2 Spring, 1954

ISABEL BAYLEY:

The Great White Owl

Although the sun had not been out in many days, Louis had the feeling as he stood ankle-deep in sand on top of the dune, that everything was flooded with light. The sea spread out beneath him, the river over his shoulder twisting its way through the woods into the bay, had an inner luminosity that lit sky and sand. They seemed to touch him, too, with their strange light and brighten the faded color of his mood. For the moment he could not remember how he had come there. He felt he had flown many miles and stood now in some distant land he had never seen, certainly not in the dunes ten miles from his home in the city.

Then he saw the bird. It was white and of great size, perched motionless on a dunetop out toward the bay. It was almost, Louis judged, as large as an albatross. But it was too far away for Louis to make out distinctly. Besides, the wind was blowing so hard across the dunes that it swirled the sand about, bent low the yellow dried tufts of grass, and ruffled the bird's feathers. It changed the bird's outline constantly so that Louis could not be sure of its shape. Yet he had the feeling that this great bird had been watching him, and that unlike most birds who fly away, frightened before man, he was looking at Louis fearlessly. Louis even had the odd sensation that the bird was welcoming him there as a fellow creature in those dunes.

A big hulk of a man standing on the dunetop with the collar of his sand-colored greatcoat turned up against the wind, Louis looked almost neckless. He had the radiant absorbed expression of a child on his reddish face. The white sands soothed him like peaceful mounds of snow. He allowed himself to fancy that he was in the Arctic, off on an adventure, that everything about him was vast and infinite in this fantastic land ruled over by a great white bird.

But grains of sand blown by the wind began to sting his ankles. He shook himself out of his trance and ran, sliding, down the side of the dune to tell his wife what he had seen.

He always relied upon Elsa to give shape and name to what happened to him. What bird could it have been? What could have given him this sense of exhilaration, of release, of freedom, he wanted to ask her. He hurried along the shore, his grey flannel trousers flapping about his long legs, towards the pile of driftwood where they had decided to build their fire.

But the moment he saw her tall thin figure in blue jeans bent over their picnic bag, the pale lusterless hair flat against her head, the wary gestures arranging, like objects in a sacred ceremony, the oil, the chicken, the bottle of rum, the sugar, the butter on the tarpaulin spread out over the sand ("I forgot the salt!" she exclaimed, as though she had committed a sin), he remembered what had sent him flying to the dunetops in the first place.

He had been striding along the beach, tasting salt on his lips. He was not here at all, in sand and shallows. He was there, high above the red buoy, rising, gliding, up, out, far off, beyond. He could go anywhere. He could do anything. He heard Elsa trailing behind him, churning sand dollars under her heels. Smiling happily, he turned, expecting to find her, too, soaring out there with him. But her furtive eyes caught him and cut down his flight. Her cautious lips blew sand out of the spiral crevices of large white periwinkle shells. Her secretive hands stuffed them into the pocket of her tan gabardine coat. He looked up and down the solitary beach, from the decaying mansion to the coast guard station, from the abandoned hull of a boat to the aircraft landing field, to see whether there was any one from whom she was trying to hide the snail shells. But the beach was empty. And why on earth should she hide snail shells as though she were stealing pearls? Her tight movements seemed to pinion him there to that narrow strand close to the grey water that scratched its foamy fingers at his heels.

Some primordial instinct must have pushed him across the boundary of her crooked line of footprints, past her shoulders, past her startled glance, and up the wrinkled mounds of sand. For he did not remember climbing the dunes at all. There he had found the great loops of light that swung him out deliciously high and far into the endless sky.

He bent down on his knees to light the fire. Eager as he was for Elsa's judgment, he kept himself from telling her about the big white bird. Let the glow hover about him shapeless and nameless. It was still better than blacking it out in her timidity. He watched Elsa stuff the little chicken with onion and a sprig of tarragon. He realized, blowing on the flame to start it up through the pyramid of twigs, that ocean and dunes showed the smallness of her movements as their dark apartment with its walls always at her elbows had never done. Shocked at the change in her that he admitted to himself for the first time — the wholesome, open face now narrow and confined, the violet eyes with their deep lights now watered down to a pale blue, the frank set of her shoulders now an evasive droop — he sat down on the fallen tree trunk, his long legs cramped in the small space between the fire and the heavy, immovable log.

With short strokes of his pocket knife, he whittled the bough into a barbecue spit. But the light from the dunetops flickered here near the water's edge. Everything denied it. The grey clouds hung in furrows that fell into the sea. The sky was darkening. The wind, as he sniffed it now with the practiced air of a weather-conscious flyer, was sharp. It blew all the heat from his little fire out to sea. Up there it had seemed gentle on his cheeks. What had seemed an exotic warmth on a winter day up there, became a bewildering functional derangement of the weather here below. It seemed to hold some imminent curse this last day of the year 1949. There had been no snow all the month of December. The warmth seemed unhealthy, deceptive, fevered, destined for a quick crisis. He clung desperately to his vision as it seeped away from him. He handed Elsa the whittled bough and began hesitantly to tell her what he had seen.

She stabbed the pointed bough through the chicken with bony fingers still greasy from the oil she had spread over the chicken skin. She did it so well that she felt pleased with herself and listened to him, encouragingly. Her attentive face, as he groped for words, fed them to him in the old compassionate way. He finished shaping what he had seen. He waited now for her to name it.

"Could it have been a great white owl?" she asked softly.

She handed it to him with a tone of wonder and acceptance. She surrounded it with an aura. He was sure now it had been a white owl. He was not even ashamed, seeing the life in her face, that he had not thought of it himself. For the papers had been full of pictures of white owls, the Arctic birds who were starved for lack of the mouse-like lemmings they fed on and who had come south in search of food.

"The Diaspora!" breathed Elsa, opening up to Louis the vision of the great dispersion, of white owls swooping all over the country into which they had blundered like ghosts of lost spirits who could not rest. In her tone he could see them flash their broad silent wings across fields, land on wires stretched from pole to pole across the sky, perch fearlessly before eyes that did not recognize them. And noticing the binoculars that hung forgotten around Elsa's neck, he felt himself back in the dunes focusing them on the bird, seeing everything he had missed — the enormous round white head, the neckless body, the magnificent white plumage, the odd tufts of feathers like a nose above the mouth, the glittering yellow eyes looking straight at him.

"A believer come among the heathens," said Elsa in one of those phrases of hers that always mystified him.

And he felt, standing up and stretching his cramped legs, that he must have been needlessly alarmed about Elsa. She still had the quickness and sensitivity of the old Elsa Howland he had met in Paris eleven years ago. Of course, then she had been bursting with energy, a tall handsome girl with shining yellow hair who was spending her junior college year abroad. The day he had met her she had gathered all the Americans she knew in her little room. He had been there, too, with her English cousin, Charles, who had been his roommate at Harvard and was on his way back to England to join the Royal Air Force. Together, crowded between her couch and her table, they had stormed at the world, for it was a few days after Munich in 1938. This is what must be done, she had said, standing with the dignity of her twenty years at the window inside the little wrought-iron balcony so that she reminded him in her simple white dress of royalty calm in the face of some great calamity — would she be guillotined? would she flee to England by coach? We must go back home, she said. We must tell them what we think of this disgraceful peace in our time. We must act. And afterwards, the three

of them, she and Charles and Louis, had sat at a table on the street corner under a red awning. Louis, fingering his wine glass shyly, had asked her admiringly what she meant to do, for he hardly understood this impassioned girl, hardly followed a great deal of what she said. She had meant, she said, her blue eyes almost violet in the late afternoon sunshine, to study law. But not now. She would go back to Smith, but only to organize student groups. America must make of itself a moral base. These crimes must not be tolerated. But he and Charles, she had said, were both so fearless. Louis had been surprised at the envy in her voice. Whether she would have the courage when the time came — she pushed her unruly yellow hair back over her large forehead. Was he joining the R.A.F. with her cousin Charles, she asked Louis. He was going to try, he said, suddenly ablaze with her zeal. Now there was more to it than just going to England with Charles to be a flier, instead of going back to Harvard alone. He held her hand with resolve as they said goodbye under the red awning. He stood a moment in admiration of this great blonde goddess. Then they had dispersed from that corner, all of them, to the four corners of the earth. Charles was killed a few years later, a beautiful target over Africa, one of the first. Louis had narrow escapes with the Eagle Squadron over Germany. Elsa, in uniform herself, landed in London, where they ran into each other on leave, and married.

But Louis, bending his elbows and stretching his arms and yawning, stopped short his gesture of relief. As though what she had said reminded her of something she wanted to forget, Elsa's face went pale. It was lifeless once more. Now she tied the tiny chicken to the bough, winding the white string round and round with quick jerky movements. Was she afraid the limp dead little bird would fly away even now before they had a chance to eat it? That tiny chicken will never be enough, he thought. Why could she not have brought another? The stick is long enough to break in two. And she said, "It was probably just a gull. How can you be sure the bird you saw was not a gull?" she repeated in a tired voice, accustomed to deception.

He sat down in the blackness she threw about him. He lifted his cramped legs toward the flame. His toes were chilled, though they almost touched the feeble fire. He could not stand to see Elsa like this, so completely without hope. As he watched her hang the skewered chicken timidly over the fire on the two forked boughs he had stuck in the sand, he began to resent her.

He realized he had no very convincing proof that he had seen an owl. Or even a bird, for that matter. He remembered how still the white thing had been across waves of white dunes risen violently to their crests. It might have been a large piece of bleached driftwood. And as for the flood of light he felt he had been standing in, he remembered now that he had not even been able to see the lighthouse, often a white stopper on the horizon on days as grey as this. He remembered, too — groping for it, catching it like an elusive dream — that the lights had gone on at the landing field across the bay, that the rotating beacon had begun to circle when he had started down the dune toward Elsa. It must have been quite dark to warrant landing field lights. Might he not have had some illusion of clarity?

But the lights, he recalled now, had all gone off for some mysterious reason as suddenly as they had come on.

He clung, then, all the more desperately to what had happened. He warmed himself with the idea that it had been a great white owl, that this had given him the wonderful sense of exhilaration, of the strange, of the fantastic, of the boundless, of the constantly possible.

And he looked at his wife over the choppy flames with a sense of being wronged. She put her hand out to rearrange the spit. Then for fear, he thought, of dropping the chicken in the fire, she brought her hand back into her pocket without touching it.

Louis heated a pan of water for hot buttered rum. Then, standing there, like a child anxious to get rid of something on his mind, his ruddy skin flushed between the red and blue rivulets of veins that always stood close to the surface of his skin, his mounds of blond eyebrows white-gold in the low firelight, he fought with himself to hold his tongue. For he wanted to confront her with it. Why have you let this hopelessness descend upon you in these eleven years? Why do you let your hair hang in long, lifeless bangs that look as though they will soon cover your eyes? Why do you sit huddled over the fire as though you were trying to hide yourself? Why do you stoop like an old woman with bent vertebrae that almost jut out of the back of your coat? Why have you let your bones dry out? If I squeezed them, they would crumble between my fingers like the decomposing bones of a mouse.

When Louis reached down into the glowing coals for the steaming pan of water, his elbow knocked the chicken into the fire. It flamed up in a great roar. The brown skin that had been oozing with oil blackened and filled the air with a pleasant burnt smell. Elsa, instead of eyeing him accusingly, looked at him and smiled as though she

were secretly glad it had happened. It gave him the odd sensation that he had been wrong in thinking she had been afraid the chicken would fall. Now he felt she had wanted to lay the little bird on the fire all along and let it burn, but had not had the courage because she knew he was hungry.

"We really shouldn't eat it," she said, a slight flush in her pale cheek. "It should be a burnt offering."

"For whose sins?" chided Louis, quickly rescuing the little laced-up bird and blowing ashes from its charred body.

"For yours and mine," she replied with a mocking smile. "Sins of ignorance and concealment. But your offering should be a female lamb without a blemish. Anything bruised or crushed or broken is not acceptable."

He felt she had read his reproaches. He hung the chicken once more over the fire and picked up the smudged porcelain pot. The wood hissed and popped bits of charcoal into the hot water. Louis poured the steaming liquid into the paper cups over lumps of sugar and rum, dropped a dab of butter into each, and handed a drink to Elsa. He was touched by the grateful way she stretched out her hand with its long fingers to take the drink, the way she thanked him and looked at him through the protection of her bangs as through a fringed awning. She would not defend herself. Not to him, her glance through the bangs seemed to say with a kind of dignity.

Feeling transparent, as he always did under her glance, he sat there uncomfortably, sipping the hot rum. She had found him out. He had held her to blame. He was perplexed by this mingling of resentment against her and a vague feeling of guilt. He tried to find something harmless to say. Something about the weather.

"I'll be glad when it finally snows," he said, his eyes on the darkening clouds.

"Snows?" he heard Elsa say at last, as though she had been brought to the surface from the deep place where she lived. She looked out and blinked with an expression that asked, where on earth would one find anything so white and peaceful as snow?

"Yes," he answered impatiently, waving his hand toward the storm clouds. He felt his case somehow reinforced again, his case for the owl, his case against her disbelief. He watched her slow, wary survey of the beach through her long eyelashes. Her paper cup, held absentmindedly in both hands, spilled a bit of rum on her coat.

It reminded him of the day almost five years ago when he had come home and found her there in the kitchen down on her knees

in front of the stove, a casserole in her hands, a lost, perplexed look in her eye. "I was saying the same things I've always said," she told him before he had a chance to take his hat off. "We must see. We must examine. We must be responsible. We must change this law. We must have this peace. But something went wrong. They wouldn't give me a loud-speaker down at the City Square. Everyone was afraid to talk. Except one man who got up on the ramp beside me and talked about his own cause, not ours at all, and one we were against. He made it look as though it had been planned that way and I was part of it. Everyone looked at me then with hostile eyes. I felt used. Used!" she cried, lookingly helplessly at the casserole still in her hands, not knowing what to do with it. "And the way the newspapers garbled it — implying that I — "

"Try to stay out of the newspapers, Elsa," he had said quietly, taking the casserole out of her hands and putting it on the table. "Just as my business is getting started —"

She had stood up then. She was about to rest her hand for support on the hot stove when he caught it and held it. She looked at him as though it had never entered her mind that what she was doing would affect him. She freed herself and tried to step back from him in the tiny kitchen. In two steps she was against the wall.

At last she said quietly, "Something has gone wrong with the climate. It's good for growing your engines and aircraft parts, but not for growing people and ideas." She sat down in a heap at the table, looked at the trickle of brown gravy still bubbling in the casserole around the meat and the black poisonous-looking mushrooms. This is what has come of it all, her glance seemed to say. This is what has come of all the hopes and plans and projects. It has all simmered down into this miserable little mess of food. In another few moments it would have been cooked away.

He had been relieved when she gave it all up. "It was those documents or us," he had said, trying to joke about her filing cabinets filled with printed documents from Washington and the United Nations — A Bill for National Health, A Bill for Fair Employment Practices, Essentials of Peace. "They were crowding us out of house and home." Her political activities seemed so remote from his life, anyway. She would be better off without the strain and the tension.

She had leaned her back against the drawer to close the cabinet in a gesture of surrender. But she had sat that evening in terror, as though afraid of being swallowed up for doing this, as though the chairs and the bronze lamp with the green shade she studied under

would crash down on her head for abandoning this thing that she had considered more important than going to law school, this shaping passive people into active citizens, this giving good mould to government. And she looked about her furtively at the couch and the radio as though her surrender, if it were only known, was scandalous, as though she must hide it from whoever might be watching and judging. And what could she do? Where could she go? To whom could she appeal?

He had been relieved. He had expected some painless modulation of her activities, some siphoning off of her energies into innocuous women's organizations. But could he know it would lead to this? That instead of forgetting and becoming her old self again — vivacious, alive, energetic, enjoying their drives into the country, a glimpse of the sea from a cliff, their intimate little dinner parties, she would grieve as over a great sorrow and a secret shame, and droop, as though, without moving from her home, she had been transplanted to an atmosphere where she could not get enough sunlight.

And now, watching her absent-mindedly rub the butter spot left on her coat by the spilled drink, he asked himself if he had had any part in this withering-away. He recalled the many times after her surrender that he had fed upon her ideas, upon her sustaining ability to make judgments. For even the night she had told him about her meeting in the Square, he had listened with half an ear. He was bursting to ask her, when he had cut short her talk about the newspaper and put the casserole on the table, what would she think of Livingston Oliver as a financial backer? Did she feel now was the time to apply for patents? Should they take an option on a small garage for experimental aircraft model flights? And he recalled how the next day, feeling himself a well-tailored young man with a future and a respectable past — for he had medals from the Air Corps — he entered Livingston Oliver's offices and walked out confident and triumphant. Elsa's words on his lips had been successful.

For he was never one to evaluate. He could do anything if he just knew what to do; could go any place fearlessly if someone told him where to go. In school he could carry the ball, run a mile, but never decide on the manoeuvers. In the army he could fly with skill but never devise strategy. The mere prospect of it filled him with apprehension. That was what turned his hair white overnight — the responsibility suddenly thrown at him when Charles had been killed. He had made a wrong decision. Only two of their aircraft had come back.

But he could always appeal to Elsa to pierce an experience to its

core for him. This will end here, she would tell him of something he had worried about. This will go on for years, she would say of something else. You have been cheated, she had said when he told her he had allowed an article he had written about an important aircraft experiment to be published without his name. Why do you let yourself be deceived so easily, she asked him, sitting under the green lampshade, stitching tucks in her suits when her weight had begun to fall off, pound after pound. Sometimes, until he got home to her at the end of the day, it was like waiting for the lights to be turned on after a scream in the theater. Only then could one see whether it had been laughter or murder.

With the confused feeling of being somehow implicated — for could not anything be a cause in this mysterious area of human results, even oneself? — he tried to put it to himself honestly. Had he consumed her? Had he left himself nothing but this timid bag of bones?

Panic-stricken — for where would he go for sustenance if she grew no better? — he felt he must try to cure her. If she could feel what he had felt on the dunetops, if she could seek again, and find . . .

He must prove to her it was no gull.

What could he tell her?

It's because of the sunspots, he might say, turning for help to science, the only area where cause and effect did not confuse him. He wanted to blow on her thin cold hand, on the fingers that looked as though they belonged in a Coptic painting, and hold them up to the fire. Regular cycles you can depend upon every twenty-one years, with lots of sunspot activity at the half-way mark. Meteorologists. Astronomers. People one does not doubt. Back in 1938 they predicted this. In eleven years, they said, in 1949, there would be sunspots, extraordinary numbers of them. Electrical whirls of energy bursting out of the sun. They change the climate. The climate undernourishes the moss and lichen. The moss undernourishes the lemmings. Starved lemmings in the Arctic mean starved owls. The owls come here. There is a great white owl back in those dunes. See? Is that so hard to believe?

If he could show her the white owl, that would do it better than talk. But would she come, he asked himself, sucking at the tiny chicken bones. Would she take his hand and follow him to the top of the dune? Would she stand there with him and fill her lungs with salt air, see the waves break on the island, the river empty through the woods into the sea, look out exhilarated on the bay? And would she look across the wrinkled waves of sand, see the owl far better than

he — for she had the binoculars — see the glittering yellow eyes, the enormous round head, the tufts like a nose under the eyes, and be stirred by a sense of the fantastic? And would she wave her arms until the long disquieting shadows fluttered across the dunes, across the patches of yellow grass, across the yellow eyes of the owl, frightening him at last into spreading his white wings, broad as the height of a man? Would she prove to herself that it was no gull?

It was risky even to suggest it. She would say she was too tired. Or her shoes were not right for climbing. Or it was too late. But she would not say the real reason. She would not be duped. Greater than the shame of not finding what she looked for, was the shame of finding it had not been there in the first place. She knew now how to keep herself from being that kind of fool.

He leaped to his feet in sudden resolve.

"Elsa. Let's go and find the owl."

She lifted her head from her deep scrutiny of the chicken bones, sucked dry in her paper plate. She surveyed him in mild surprise. Then smiling faintly, she looked up and down the beach. She seemed to be searching for something to divert him. Fishing in her pockets, she pulled out three snail shells. One by one she placed them on the charred log behind the fire.

"Look," she said. "A cryptic triptych." She picked up the large periwinkle shell in the center. "Here goes the Saviour," she said, and tossed it towards the grey water. It hit a large boulder and shattered into little white bits on the sand. Then pointing at the two shells, at the empty space between them, "Now," she said, looking at him expectantly, waiting for him to carry on the game, "only the two thieves remain."

But he sat down resentfully in the cramped space between the log and the fire. He felt humiliated. She had not even dignified his proposal with a reply. She had treated him like a child who must be distracted from some foolish act. He threw his wad of greasy napkins into the dying fire and watched it flame up.

"A black duck," he heard Elsa say under the binoculars.

Peevishly he looked at the black bird swimming by, flashing its neck white in the grey expanse of sea.

"It's a grebe," he said irritably, picking at the black bits of burnt chicken skin left between his teeth. "He holds his head up straight. A duck holds his up only when he's alarmed."

"What makes you think this bird is not alarmed?" she asked in a flat dead voice, her binoculars still at her eyes.

"There is nothing to alarm him. Don't you see? It's completely calm here. There are certainly no hunters," he went on impatiently, on the verge of losing his temper against her exaggerated sense of danger. He wanted to go off by himself and find the owl. Yet he could not leave Elsa here alone. It would be like leaving her in the middle of the night, the day was turning so dark. He watched her throw another log on the dying fire with the slow lifeless movements of old age. She obviously did not want to go home either. She seemed to want nothing but to sit quietly through this slow lingering out of a day that was already night.

He poured himself some more rum. And suddenly the idea hit him with the force of something so obvious he wondered why he had never thought of it before. For what, he asked himself, looking across the fire at the congealed figure of Elsa, could his life with her be these next five, ten years? All the long arid days stretched out before him. The evenings when he would come home to find her sitting drooped, defeated, over a newspaper. The suppers when he would listen to her sigh helplessly over a radio news commentator. "It's just merchandise to him," she would say with that air of being present at a tragedy. "He can package it any way he wants. It's something for him to sell, irresponsibly, not news for him to report." He saw in his mind the indifferent, colorless clothes hanging in her closet with no smell of perfume floating from them. He could hear the anemic words she would speak in a faint lifeless voice, standing on her long bones of legs in a dress that sagged about her fleshless hips, between excited men and women shouting at her at parties. For she would not, she had told him, lose hold of herself and argue politics with his friends. He saw the creeping years with this woman in whom something was dying a slow tortuous death. She will never be cured of it, he told himself. And her sickness is infecting me.

It struck him suddenly. Why should he stay tied to her?

He had always been somewhat mystified over why she had married him, why that dazzling, brilliant girl had fallen in love with a simple, uncomplicated boy whose passion was cars and airplanes and speed. She had said to him once, "For you everything is possible. You are a believer, not like these others." But he had really not known what she meant. He had wondered later whether she had mistaken his simplicity, his willingness to try anything, regardless of danger — of which he was usually unaware, anyway — for a faith based on a knowledge he had never possessed.

He threw the tiny chicken bones one by one into the fire and listened to them crackle. He longed to free himself of her, to have the taste of excitement in his mouth, to go to another country, to fall in love again. He longed to satisfy this bottomless physical hunger for adventure, for the swift, the daring, the reckless. He longed to fly again, to wonder how a day would end, to soar above the clouds under the moon.

He longed to end this day prowling in the deepening grey dunes stalking a fantastic white bird.

There was a flash of lightning. That was strange. Louis sniffed the air. In winter? Then he realized what it was. They were in for a sunspot storm — a huge magnetic storm originating in the sun. All kinds of violent disruptions might occur — in radio broadcasts, in lights, in anything electric.

The bark of a dog ripped the long silence.

The hound came leaping across the beach, his brown ears flapping, his blue eyes bloodshot and sharp. He jumped on Louis with a force that might have knocked down a smaller man. Louis squatted and put his arms around the dog's neck. He rubbed his brown and white fur as the dog panted at his feet. Then he looked up the beach to see whose dog it was.

Three pilots in brown leather jackets and flight boots emerged from the grey mist that had settled on sand and water. The shortest man walked a little ahead of the other two and seemed to be the butt of a joke. The biggest pilot, a few steps behind, flung his hand deprecatingly at him and guffawed at the third, who joined in the laughter. Resolutely the little pilot in front walked toward the fire. He looked warily at the flames pushed about by the squally wind.

He braced himself on his solid, short legs, and, with a defiance directed at the two companions now close at his heels, he asked Louis, "Hey, Bub, seen any white owls around here?"

Louis shot a triumphant glance at Elsa.

"I saw one," said Louis. "Back in those dunes." He indicated with a proprietary wave of the hand.

"One would do it," said the little pilot, giving the other two a canny, self-congratulatory smile, showing a wide space between his two front teeth. Then, his broad squarish head flung back, he strode, full of satisfaction and purpose, in the direction Louis had shown him. The dog bounded ahead.

The two pilots gave Louis a queer look.

"You sure you saw a white owl?" asked the big one, obviously the bully. "This might cost me a bet of five bucks. Tiny, there, has been hepped on these owls for weeks." He laughed out of his loose big lips in a way that implied that Tiny, of course, was an idiot.

"He says they've been on the antennae down at our landing field," said the slim, red-haired pilot with pink boyish cheeks. "But none of the rest of us has laid eyes on 'em. We thought he must be seeing things."

"Go see for yourself," said Louis, having all he could do to keep from going along.

It was not until all three pilots were on top of the dune that Louis noticed their rifles. Then he heard a piercing, inhuman scream, a shrill, tremulous cry across the grey dunes. It shot through Louis with instant foreboding. What a beautiful target, he thought, cursing himself for his stupidity. He forced Elsa up by the hand and dragged her with him. But they were only halfway up the dune — the shifting sand slowed them down maddeningly — when the rifle shot rang down to them. They were out of breath and completely exhausted by the time they reached the little group gathered at the crest of the highest dune, the exact spot where Louis had seen his bird hours before.

There in the sand, blood dripping down its white feathers, its enormous wings spread out the length of a tall man, its strange eyes propped stiffly open in a wide yellow glitter, was the great white owl.

This killing would place a curse upon them all, thought Louis with the flyer's superstition about omens. He felt guiltily he had had some part in it, too. If he had not been absorbed with his own little feeling of triumph when the pilot had asked him about the white owl, he might have noticed the rifles in time.

"Why did you kill him?" Louis asked. It was almost a sob.

"Why, because he's caused us plenty of trouble today, that's why," said the biggest pilot. He seemed completely unaware that he had switched to Tiny's side. "I was talking down a ship in the control tower, had her a clear green pip in my radar scope. We had just put all the lights on because the ceiling was low. Turned on the rotating beacon, too. Then for no reason at all my scope went off. Landing beam screwed up, beacons, the whole works. Most mysterious thing you ever saw. Then Tiny, here, started to talk about white owls. It was an owl, he said, did it. When the ship came in all right — pure luck it was — we said, O.K. Tiny, let's go hunt your white owls. Tiny's been wanting to take a shot at one ever since he heard they were shooting them down off the landing poles at Willow Run."

"Sure," piped Tiny happily. "Those owls sit on the radar dish and deflect the beams so we can't pick up the ship. I read about it in a magazine. The white owl is just a big dumb bird. Knows nothing about civilization," Tiny went on with a swagger, eager to tell what he knew. "Knows nothing about men, either. That's why he's not afraid of 'em, like other birds. They're killing 'em all over the country," he said righteously. "Some of 'em are so weak from hunger they can't fly away."

Louis wanted to say, sunspots. Sunspots. Don't you see? The same thing that made your lights go out made this owl come here. One did not cause the other. They are both results of black spots on the face of the sun.

And I personally could vouch for the innocence of this owl, he was surprised to find himself thinking. He was perched right here looking at me when your lights went out, his mind ran on as though presenting vital evidence no one would listen to before a court of law in a bad dream.

But the sunspot storm broke then in sudden fury. Big dirty drops of rain pounded the sand and sent it up in stinging pellets that needled their ankles and dropped in cold streams into their shoes. The storm became an impenetrable grey torrent of merciless rain that fell without the indirection of diagonals, but straight on their heads, down into their eyes. It spattered the blood from the owl on their fingers. It came down so hard on the white feathers, the open eye sockets, the viscera, that the bird was no longer recognizable as an owl. It might, thought Louis looking at Elsa standing like a grim oracle with her hair drenched in wild wet strings, rooted to the scene of her evil prophecy, it might just as well have been a gull.

There was no point, Louis told himself with resignation, in explaining things to the pilots. They would not understand. They might even suspect him of something. He did not know of what, exactly. Possibly of collusion with the owl, he told himself crazily, to black out their landing field. Or even of making the rainstorm. And all anyone wanted now was protection from the storm. He stumbled with Elsa down the slushy sand, splashing through the torrents of blinding rain in what he hoped was the direction of the shore.

Well, he would probably not see another white owl for a long time. Maybe not until the next great dispersion in eleven years. Where would he be in 1960? Off to another war? he wondered submissively. Certainly not with Elsa, he promised himself, imagining he had found his cure.

IRVIN STOCK:

Mann's Christian Parable: A View of 'The Holy Sinner'

It is not the least among the distinctions of Thomas Mann's novels that they are intensely enjoyable. This is worth mentioning because he has what might have been the handicap of being a philosophic novelist, and his tales are the deliberate embodiment of ideas. His characters are "real" — that is, they exist in their own right as convincing and recognizable human beings — and, more entertaining still, they are generally passionate. Indeed, they are often physically passionate, and few novelists convey more persuasively than Mann the intoxication of lust. Moreover, these characters always unfold their natures and their author's meanings in stories arranged for maximum dramatic effectiveness. Such pleasure does he take in his marvelous showmanship, in fact, that he is not unwilling to call attention to it, often announcing his big scenes with the complacent preliminary flourish of a performing magician. Add to this that he is very funny, a fact to which we don't do enough justice if we talk merely of his celebrated "irony." It is true that most of his humor comes from his ironic doubleness of vision, his sly "seeing through" things. But irony does not always appear as humor. His does because this joke of another side to things, instead of making him weakly bitter, delights him — which means he has a tenderness, and even a relish, for the human mixture. (*The Magic Mountain* is essentially a comic novel — we hardly ever stop smiling, even where we are thrilling with awe.) Mann gives us thus, for all his concern with ideas, the richest combination of fictional pleasures. And because of an economy which makes all his details mean a surprising number of things at once, these pleasures in his novels often come together. This intensifies them. A wonderful example is the climax of *The Holy Sinner,* a recognition scene in which the mysteries of both the human drama and its theme are simultaneously unveiled, and we are moved, we laugh, and our minds blaze with insight all at the same time.

Or rather, this is so far true only of some of us. And in fact, the inadequacies of the first printed responses to *The Holy Sinner* are the

reason for the following remarks. Not that most readers have failed to see it as entertaining. But there has been a tendency to think that to its success in this regard has been sacrificed either general meaningfulness altogether, or at least that gravity *about* meanings which is apparently required as proof that they are deeply felt. For instance, in *Partisan Review* (November-December, 1951) it was considered an excellent story, but too obviously written for its author's relaxation and its readers' amusement to be taken seriously. (As though aware such a notion was risky about a Mann novel, the critic did dig out a meaning roughly related to one part of its theme, but he felt that if that was the intended meaning it had not been adequately presented.) And in *Kenyon Review* (Winter, 1952), while no attempt was made to formulate a theme, Mann was regarded as having "parodied" his characteristic insights, as having exhibited a "complacency" that destroyed their interest and their value.

Now I believe that, lively story though the novel is, a chief source of our pleasure in it is precisely intellectual — it is the constant and growing meaningfulness of every development — and that a theme *has* been adequately presented. And while there is no question that something like parody and something like complacency make for a great deal of the fun, to use the words pejoratively is to have missed the point, since these effects are part of it. For what *The Holy Sinner* aims to show us is that good and evil — holiness and sinfulness — are necessary to each other, and that the godlike foreknowing author — knowledge, in short — can hardly take evil as "seriously" as the ordinary man must, for he sees, even as his simple humanity shrinks from it, the good which it makes possible. Nor is this all: a descent from "proper" gravity also results from a meaning which goes deeper still. Not only are good and evil mixed to a point where simple judgment is confused and neither can be taken with full seriousness; the conception of life which, together, they represent is shown to be, like every conception, fundamentally arbitrary, an imposition on indifferent nature, from whose point of view it can sometimes look terribly silly. And these two ideas are the theme of *The Holy Sinner,* of which, however, as will appear, there is much more to be said. Far, indeed, from providing its author with relaxation after the profound philosophic labors of *Doctor Faustus,* this novel is a deliberate and clear extension of Mann's characteristic insights into areas they have never till now so thoroughly explored. And there is hardly a detail on any page that does not provide us with the intellectual thrill of the double

awareness: that of its deep familiar roots and its startling new blossoms.

In order to see how this little novel comes to mean what I have said — and somewhat more — it will be helpful to look first at its story. I will repeat it, but I will use as my source one of the medieval versions — that in the *Gesta Romanorum* — which served Mann for his. The two are almost identical, and it will also be of interest to catch a partial glimpse of the novel's origins.[1]

An emperor, dying, charges his son to find a husband for his beloved daughter, but soon after his death she grows heavy with her brother's child. Full of remorse, the brother accepts the counsel of a trusty knight that he set out on a penitential voyage to the Holy Land, while the knight's wife assists at the birth of his son. The young emperor dies abroad and his son, unbaptized, is abandoned to the sea in a cask. He is provided with rich garments and money, however, and near him is placed a tablet on which his high and sinful birth is revealed and his finder is requested to baptize, rear and educate him. The doubly bereaved mother determines never to marry, and some time later, refusing the advances of a hot-headed duke, provokes him to a war which devastates her country and leaves her, for refuge, only a single fortified city.

A good story-teller, the anonymous author now drops the queen and her interesting trouble and turns to her son (Mann following his lead here as elsewhere). The sea has cast him up at the feet of an abbot and his fisherman. He is baptized by the abbot and educated at his monastery — where he soon surpasses all in knowledge — and he is reared as a son of one of the fishermen. One day, accidentally hurting a supposed brother, he learns from the angry mother that he was a foundling out of the sea. He declares to the abbot that he can stay no longer, but wants to go off as a soldier, and he begs in "intolerable suspense" some knowledge of his true parents. He cannot be moved by the abbot's promise that he will himself be abbot in time if he remains, and so the old man consents to his departure and shows him the tablet found in the cask. He swoons with horror. When he can speak again, he asks to be made a knight so that he can "hasten to the Holy Land to do battle for the sins of the unhappy authors of my being." This is done, but contrary winds drive the ship in which he has set out onto the coast of his mother's city. There he learns of the queen's plight, offers her his services, kills the duke and restores

[1] The reader interested in Mann's sources is referred to the study of this novel by Professor Herman J. Weigand in *The Germanic Review* of February and April, 1952.

her lost lands, and finally, at the suggestion of her steward that the realm needs such a man, is given the hand of the queen in marriage.

They are blissfully happy, but one day, while Gregory is out to the hunt, the queen is informed by a maid that he often emerges from his chamber in tears. She searches the room, finds the tablet and confronts him with it, and though both struggle for a moment against full realization, the agony is not to be avoided and she cries out at last: "My son! For thou art so; my only son and my husband and my lord." We see that the old tale did not have to wait for Mann to grow disquietingly suggestive. The exclamation is followed by her question: "Why, O God, didst Thou permit my birth since I was born to be guilty of such wickedness?" — a familiar theological challenge, but surely especially pertinent here, that is, in a tale designed precisely to answer it and to show that her wickedness was essential to a process leading to the supremely good.

And Gregory says: "I thought to have shunned this evil, and I have fallen into the snares of the devil." We suddenly learn that he has considered the possibility that he unwittingly marry his mother a very real one, of course, though improbable. No modern novelist, however, exposing unconscious knowledge and guilt, the old author does not pause to wonder whether Gregory's awareness that he *could* marry his mother means, as it might well, a suppressed awareness that the queen *could* be she. The fact of incest is bad enough, and forbidding the anguished woman to leave her throne, Gregory sets out the next day to seek penance on a pilgrimage that ends on a rock in the sea. To this he has been led by a fisherman, whose wife had persuaded the man to shelter him, and who obligingly chains him to the rock and throws the key into the water.

Seventeen years later, on the death of the Pope, a voice from heaven declares that a man of God called Gregory is to replace him. Some messengers, in search of the chosen one, reach the fisherman's hut, and though he thinks the pilgrim must be dead, the key to his chains suddenly turns up in a fish's belly and this seems a good omen. They find their man on the rock, they bring him to Rome, whose church bells ring of their own accord at his approach, and Gregory becomes a great Pope, sought out for counsel and assistance by multitudes. Hearing of his sanctity, his mother goes to him to confess and be absolved. It is not till after the confession that they recognize each other. She weeps for joy and we are told in conclusion that he founded a monastery of which he made her abbess, and that soon afterward both died.

Thus the old tale. Now in the *Gesta Romanorum* each story is followed by an "application" or moral, which a recent editor has impatiently stripped away as an excrescence on the pure narrative. We can sympathize with him. The emperor, we are bluntly told of this one, is Christ, who gave the human soul, his daughter, to its brother, the flesh. "The son born of these is all mankind. The cask is the Holy Spirit, which floats on the sea of the world." The bad duke is the Devil — and so forth. The medieval application, in short, seems not so much to reveal meaning in all that sin, anguish and triumph as to cancel out their actuality. Yet, as Mann will show us, the old monks were moving in the right direction. And to what has already been said of the theme we may now add that the tale *is* full of Christian meaning: it is precisely the relationship of Mann's familiar insights to insights embodied in Christianity that Mann's version is designed to show.

But the fact that the old tale is so perfect a vehicle for both that it need hardly be changed at all presents the novelist with his major esthetic problem. The problem is: How to make us hidebound realists accept a medieval tale of Christian miracle. To solve this problem he does two things. Not only does he bring the tale closer to us, making its characters and their crises "real" — this we would expect. He also brings us closer to the tale, by loosening our allegiance to the modern literary convention of realism. This is one of the two chief reasons for the monk who is his narrator and for the "rambling" reflections with which this monk introduces his story.

The convention is attacked head-on: Mann pointedly begins with the story's "grace-abounding end,"[2] the miraculous ringing of the bells of Rome. "Who rings them?" it is asked. And the answer is, "the spirit of story-telling," a spirit which is "as air," "free," "abstract," "not subject to distinctions of here and there." We are thus reminded at the start, we who might object to the miracles to come, that any story, for all the tricks by which it tries to appear "natural," is essentially miraculous. "Reality" is as clay in its hands, to be molded to the spirit's purposes. But the narrator goes on. "And yet he [the spirit of story-telling] can gather himself into a person . . . and be incarnate in somebody who speaks in him" — and this somebody now introduces himself. He is Clemens, an Irish monk with all the limiting particularity of any actual person (we glimpse at once his

[2] All my quotations from the novel are, of course, from the excellent translation of Mrs. H. T. Lowe-Porter.

funny jealousy, as an Irishman, of the Roman authority). To say that he "embodies" that spirit disturbs our monk, however, for the body is the domain of Satan. And yet, on the other hand, it is also "the vehicle of the soul and God-given reason, without which these would be deprived of their basis," and so one must regard the body as a "necessary evil." Now we shall soon learn that this remark has more than one connection with the novel. What is pertinent here is that it is another step in that instruction in the mysteries of art with which Mann has found it politic to begin. The "necessary evil" of the body is in this case a metaphor for the particular narrative conventions through which the spirit of story-telling must operate, but which are not identical with it, which, indeed, work against it by limiting the freedom that is its essential character. The implication is clear that though we must use a particular convention, we must not forget it is only a "vehicle," nor reject what the spirit may have to offer by other means.

So, throughout the story, we find the monk slyly discrediting the realistic convention which he perforce employs. "What know I of knighthood and venery," he interrupts his own vivid and enthusiastic description of the young prince's education. The technical terms "which I use with such apparent ease," he goes on, "I have just picked up. But so is the way and the spirit of story-telling which I embody that all it tells of it pretends to have experienced and to be at home in it." With realism itself thus shown to be mere trickery, the miracles to come should find us less stiffly "modern" in our response to them.

But we are still not done with the monk's rich first pages. He points out that the spirit of story-telling, though it has submitted in him to the limiting of incarnation, is at least embodied in a monk, Clemens, one who has "put off" with the grosser name of Morhold his fleshly self. In him therefore the spirit "has preserved much of that abstraction which enables it to ring from all the titular basilicas of the city at once." And he gives two examples of this "abstraction." First, his manuscript is not dated — he would make it impossible to say that it takes place at one certain time and no other. And second, it is written in a fluid mixture of languages (these are "Latin, French, German, or Anglo-Saxon," and we do in fact meet scraps of each later on) which all "become one — in other words, language."

> For the thing is so, that the spirit of narration is free to the point of abstraction, whose medium is language in and for itself, language itself, which sets itself as absolute and does not greatly care about

> idioms and national linguistic gods. That indeed would be polytheistic and pagan. God is spirit, and above languages is language.[3]

Have we not been told that the monk is here an artist, a man detached to some degree from the desires and fears in which he deals, his point of view deeper than common, more "spiritual"? And do not these two examples of the tale's "abstraction" define precisely the abstraction to which the artist aspires: timelessness and universality? We are to find, indeed, that the people in this tale (if not the way in which they express themselves) are not peculiar to one time, but recognizably human and hence possible always; and that the tale's meaning, its truth, though embodied in medieval Christian idioms and symbols, is not identical with these, but only being expressed by them, as it can also be expressed by the "languages" of other cultures and religions. To think differently is, pagan-like, to bow to the mere vehicles — idols which incessantly multiply themselves — not to the Truth which they all attempt, with only partial success, to embody.

But, as I have said, there is another reason for this preface, as well as for the monk it introduces. These pages serve too as a characteristic Mann overture, foreshadowing the developments to come. That whole business of the distinction between spirit and body — or rather of the relationship between them — is also a way of describing the novel's plot, and is pertinent both to its concern with art and its concern with Christianity. And this is the second function of Mann's medieval narrator. Just as, in his character of story-teller, he shows how art works (weakening our faith in those conventions which the tale must violate), so, as a monk, he gives us the tale's Christian meaning. And thus he wonderfully unites in a single person the novel's double intention.

Before we explore this directly, however, we must examine how Mann performed his second task, that of bringing the tale closer to us. For in fiction psychology must precede philosophy, and it is naturally Mann's understanding of his people — of their experience — that will determine what he discovers their fate to mean. It will also, of course, reveal the permanent human significance of the Christian "language" in which the monk describes it.

---

[3] There is a meaning in this that is pertinent to Mann's own career. He seems to have copied the first sentence of this quotation from his Foreword to the one-volume edition of *Joseph and His Brothers* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1948, p. xiii), where he thus defended himself from the charge that his language, all mixed with foreign elements, was no longer German. "Really?" the present novel ironically comments. "Behold, then, how much further I dare go in the same direction. We shall see who is master, language or the human mind."

Mann's basic method of making the story "real" to us is to expose the additional, the hidden, motives for every act. It is simplicity that is archaic; with a warring mixture of motives we are instantly at home. So the dying father turns out to have left his daughter unmarried because he had loved her only too well, rejecting all her suitors as if they were hated rivals. Just such a rival, indeed, had the son, her brother, become, a fact the young man is aware of, if not "on top [where] the soul pretends," then "underneath, where truth abides in quietness" — a phrase used during the climactic confession, but pertinent throughout. For he dreams revealing dreams of the father's terrible animosity.

In Mann's version Gregor (as he is called) does not have to wait for the discovery of his birth to feel beneath his apparent relatedness to those about him a something that divides him from them, a something both sweet and bitter as it both raises him above them and sinks him below. For his high and sinful birth has its counterpart — or result — in certain "gifts" which make him awkwardly different and which make not only his "father's" life as a fisherman seem impossible to him, but even that of cloistered scholar, apparently more suitable. He dreams of knighthood — of winning love and glory by rescuing the distressed. And when he demands to leave the monastery to seek out his parents and, by such knighthood, to redeem their sin, this comes less as the simply "logical" decision of the legend than as the realization of presentiments and wishes.

As for the mother-son incest, that unfortunate accident turns out to have been no accident at all, but a fate secretly willed by both. And this awful guilt is exposed first darkly in innumerable ambiguities that enrich from its earliest moment the narrative of their relationship, and then plainly at the end where Pope and Duchess (the queen of the old tale) confess their deepest secrets. The many little signs that he was her son which she had failed to recognize — though they had alarmed her and started memories of bliss and pain — their meaning *had* in fact been grasped "underneath," and it was her sinful desire for her own flesh and blood that both prevented conscious recognition and made the pretended relationship so wondrously sweet. Nor was the son less guilty, as the great Pope is to pain her by firmly insisting. Reason alone would have had to tell him that she *could* have been his mother. But feeling, he says, had made it unmistakable from the beginning.

Such mixtures, such ambiguities, occur everywhere throughout the novel. But it is in the character and fate of Gregor, the holy sinner,

that we find the particular mixture that leads us most directly to its theme. An early statement of it comes when the Duchess, thanking her young champion for his conquest of her enemy, points out what seems a contradiction between his thought and his behavior. "Wherein does the humility and abasement of the Christian draw the courage, nobility and presumption of the knight?" "Lady," he replies, "all bravery and every daring emprise to which we dedicate ourselves, and on which we set our all and uttermost springs only from the knowledge of our guilt, springs from the fervid yearning to justify our lives and accordingly before God to redeem a little of our debt of sin." This explanation of Gregor's behavior, which makes it hard to know whether he should be blamed for his sin, or given credit for his bravery and holiness, is a central formula in the novel, not only stated explicitly a number of times, but clearly defining the very plot. We know that if there had been no sinful birth to be discovered, he would never have left the monastery on that journey leading to the papal throne (indeed, he would not have existed). When, married to the Duchess, he becomes an especially good Duke, it is "only because he so urgently needed to be." And when the mother learns that the Pope is her son, she exclaims, "Grigorss, poor darling, how ruthlessly you must have done penance, for God to have set you so far above us sinners." And thus even his ultimate holiness is linked to a penance made especially severe because of a sinfulness especially black.

And this holiness is even further compromised. For the Pope it is — "underneath" — a thing welcomed not merely as the necessary counterweight to all his sins, but quite plainly as the tool of a selfish motive. Mann's hero, no less than that of the old tale, sets out on his fateful journey in order to do battle for the sins of his parents. And his first words when, on that desolate rock he is given the great name of Pope, and with it the keys to the gates of heaven, the power to bind and loose, are, "Sweet parents, I will loose you." Moreover, "has he not become so great a Pope," it is later asked, "in order that his fame should penetrate everywhere, and so to her ear as well?"

So, with the mixture at work in Gregor we reach the first stage in our grasp of the novel's theme. But if we are thus led to "see through" the good to its dark other side, we are not left in mere cynicism. For this double nature of the Pope not only compromises his greatness, it also belongs to it — it is itself the source of the peculiar wisdom which makes him a blessing to his people. Our

first example of this occurs immediately after his descent from the rock. In Mann too the fisherman's wife had persuaded her husband to shelter the pilgrim. But the modern novelist reveals that when the fisherman gladly chains him to the rock, it is out of spite at his obvious nobility, a spite aggravated by the suspicion that his wife's generosity was due to the pilgrim's good looks. And lo, when the fisherman's wife kneels before the Pope seventeen years later, she confesses that her husband had been right. "Wantonness was at the bottom of the good I did you, depraved lost soul that I am." At this, in a decision foreshadowing many others of which we are to be briefly told, the new Pope willingly pronounces the words, "Absolvo te." For "seldom" he says, "is one wholly wrong in pointing out the sinful in the good, but God graciously looks at the good deed even though its root is in fleshliness."

Now this "Christian" forbearance engenders problems — as we are instantly reminded. "The woman was blissful," the monk observes. "I suspect she derived from his absolution leave to feel still a little love for him in fleshly wise." Forgiveness of sin, that is, can sometimes work like toleration of it. Nevertheless, since "no one was worthy, and he himself on account of his flesh most unworthy of his dignity," the Pope chose thereafter to take the risk of "enforcing the divine mercy in cases where the Deity would scarcely have come on by Itself." For he believed that

> one should lighten the sinner's load, that remorse might be sweet to him. Justice is hard- and horny-handed, while the world of the flesh needs indeed firmness, yet gentleness. If one so zealously pursue the sinner, one may well bring more harm than healing. Too rash a penance laid upon a seeker for grace may make him lose heart, not bear it and again renounce God, spoilt as he is by the Devil, whose service he in reverse remorse takes up again. Accordingly it is statesmanlike to make mercy go before justice, since it creates the right measure in the life of the spirit by which means the sinner is saved and the good is constantly preserved, that the honour of God may wax mightily in the Roman Empire.

Here, then, is a theme for this novel, "entertaining" though it is, and one which surely justifies the "complacency," the lack of full seriousness, with which it takes its appalling sins. The greatness through which the chosen ones shed blessings on the rest of us is born out of weakness — they could not have become our fruitful superiors if they had not felt painfully the reverse — and *knowledge* of their weakness is, of their greatness, an essential ingredient. A

theme, I said, for even this must submit to its author's irony, which will carry us deeper. But before we descend, let us acknowledge and examine what the reader of Mann will already have noticed: the fact that in the holy sinner, no less than in his monkish narrator, we find Mann's eternal artist, of whose character and fate the story is a kind of parable. It is, I think, no coincidence that the chapter devoted to the greatness of the Pope and the blessings he brought should end with the observation that, while part of his authority was due to his knowledge, part was due also to the fact that he was "very beautiful to look upon, as children of sin, for whatever reason, often are." For "he is gladly hearkened to, whom one loves." Mann has showed us long before that the work of art too is a fruit of "sin" in that it comes from the lawless realm of desire and feeling — the artist is one afflicted with knowledge of this, a knowledge he shares with his happier ordinary brothers in beautiful form. At any rate, the story of Gregor abounds in evidence of the kinship.

There is first the fact that the sin which gives him birth (a sin fruitful at once, we are pointedly told, as his father's virtuous marriage had not been for years) and which, in his monstrous marriage, leads on to his final glory, is at bottom the sin of excessive self-love. Mann has changed the old tale precisely to enforce this view of its incest, for he has made the guilty brother and sister twins, and he has explicitly named the evil mating self-love more than once. Elsewhere he had already spoken of the love with which the artist can regard his very hand. And in "The Blood of the Walsungs" the incest of a pair of twins is a kind of substitute for art, growing out of the same dangerous soil. Artistic sensibility there ends in sterile and destructive self-indulgence because self-love is not balanced by that love for the "others" which, in Mann's view, art needs in order to rise above mere bohemianism and to grow productive. But in Gregor the balance is present. Though the most frightful "self-love" is essential to his fate, he knows salvation must lie in turning to "other blood," as that earlier successful artist Tonio Kröger, drawn forever to the healthy blue-eyed ones (the "bourgeois," the "human"), knew it long before.[4]

There is above all Gregor's character, which any reader of Mann

[4] That it was Mann who made Gregor's parents twins is true according to my present knowledge, at least. Of course, it doesn't matter where the detail comes from — its *meaning* is now *Mann's*. I am reminded, incidentally, by the brilliant and delightful radio dialogue on *Joseph and His Brothers* which Maurice Samuel and Mark Van Doren conducted last summer (1953), that, in that majestic work too, self-love is the sin which leads, by way of the "pit," to ultimate glory and beneficence.

must instantly recognize. He is the familiar dreamer, gifted and lonely, irritating others with a superiority which he makes even more offensive by trying charitably to hide it, melancholy at last with a sense that even with his "rightness," that is, his gifts, "it was quite distinctly not right," and longing for a glory he needs in order to assuage his guilt and win others to him. Again we are reminded of Tonio Kröger, who becomes an artist because for him "there is no such thing as a right way," and who, pained to find that an officer he had been prepared to respect actually wrote verses, cries, "I ask you: a lieutenant! A man of the world! He surely did not need to . . ."

It is not only in the awkwardness of his superiority, however, but also in its nature that Gregor resembles the artist. He is one who, in competition, "came off better with his weakness than the others with their strength . . . because he understood better than they did how to pull himself together." To this power of concentration is added another, of which we learn when he conquers the Duchess' evil wooer, here a Duke named Roger. Instead of simply chasing and killing him, as in the old tale, he makes him a prisoner, that his power might be useful to the Duchess. And he does so by a trick which involves using the enemy's own strength to entangle him and then gripping his sword in one hand, though the weapon draws blood. The aptness of this struggle as a symbol for the life of art — and for more — will be examined further on. It is enough now to observe that this power of "pulling himself together" beyond the average and this "firm-holding hand" become Gregor's *"Leitmotifs,"* the phrases recurring again and again. And surely these, together with the ambition born of his guilt, are the essential characteristics of productive genius.

Finally, when Gregor first learns he is not the fisherman's son, he cries, "Since I know who I am not, only one thing avails: the journey after myself, the knowledge of who I am." He soon discovers his exalting and humiliating birth and his journey becomes a struggle for redemption. But are not both motives involved in the fate of the artist? We hardly need, in order to see the bearing of the first, to remember Mann's own observation in the preface to his *Stories of Three Decades* that works of art are modes of self-realization, "stones on that harsh road which we must walk to learn of ourselves." And the bearing of the second motive the whole story has made clear. The artist, as Mann has always shown him, is divided from the "others" by a self-consciousness which is born of

extreme self-love and which means inferiority, as it makes for awkwardness in ordinary living, and superiority, as it makes for knowledge. And his achievement, in which he shares his hard-won knowledge with those others by making it easy to take, by making it beautiful, is also due in large part to the desire to atone for his guilty difference and to win the love of others.

I mentioned Mann's use of the *Leitmotif*. For Mann, his notion of the artist is, of course, the basic *Leitmotif* in the whole body of his work. And it functions in the same way as the smaller ones do in particular books. In these it is a phrase which first rises naturally out of a particular human context and then recurs in others where it takes on a more general significance. This, we know, is a source of Mann's ironic humor. When the Pope, for instance, decides that a bastard can become a bishop, "if the illegitimate one was a true and religious man, and godly, and of a firm-holding hand," we recognize in that last phrase a memory of his youth and we smile to see through the pretense of impersonal wisdom. And yet we see more than the lowly personal origin of the generalization; we see also, with a small shock of insight, the general meaning of what began as personal. Just so do we see through the present tale of good and evil to Mann's familiar ideas about the artist, but with a smile not wholly ironical, for we have also learned the latter can take in much more than we thought, their personal basis only guaranteeing the felt validity of the rest.

To all of which it must be added, however, that if Gregor is Mann's eternal artist, he is also a demonstration of how Mann's attitude has changed. Though he began his career by emphasizing what divided the artist from the others, he emphasizes now what joins him to them, the social task his peculiar isolation and anguish have enabled him to perform. And this is why his artist is shown more and more — remember Joseph — in the role of leader and savior.

It remains for us now to descend to rock bottom. The theme we have already found — that of the close and fruitful relationship of good and evil — is not, as has been said, the novel's only meaning, though upon it depends the actual story with all its shame and triumph. There is that other "opposition" I have mentioned, an opposition which is prior. Before we can have good and evil at all we must impose a spiritual scheme on the chaos of Nature, who is herself supremely "indifferent." "He was a man and she a woman and so they [mother and son] could become man and wife, for that is all that Nature cares about," the monk tells us, "desperately" trying

to justify the pair whose love and need have won his "Christian" sympathy. But "my spirit cannot find itself in Nature; it rebels," he goes on. "She is of the Devil for her indifference is bottomless." No, spirit cannot leave them simply man and woman, it must give them names — mother and son — and thereby replace their joyous indifference with notions of sin, and with pain. When the mother and son learn their "true" relationship and she in horror utters it by name, he shudders and holds up his hand. "Mother, desecrated one," he says. "Speak not so plainly. But yet do so. I understand why thou dost. We shall speak expressly and name things by name to our chastisement. For to tell truth, that itself is chastisement."

But this naming of things is also absurd. And of this absurdity Mann playfully reminds us — such is his staggering mastery of his ideas and his art — at the very moments when it is causing its most moving anguish and exaltation. Here is another serious reason for his lightness, and especially for his perpetual "kidding" at those climactic moments about the tangle of relationships which the sinful-fruitful matings have produced. "Since the father is the brother of the mother," the knight Eisengrin reproachfully explains to the first incestuous pair, "he is uncle to the child, and the mother, since she is the father's sister, is its aunt and fantastically carries her little nephew or niece about in her womb. Such a disorder and confusion have you unthoughted brought into God's world!" But what has happened after all? A young male and female, occupying adjoining beds, have responded "naturally" to the "natural" promptings of their flesh. And they have had such fun! And they are so ready to be happy with the baby that results! That confusion, which, when the nephew marries his aunt, grows even more laughable, and, if he were to marry *their* children, would mean, as he says, "the defeat of thought," that ridiculous complication is not inherent in the act, but comes out of man's mind and would not exist if we would only leave the blissful pair unnamed. And this is what that "kidding" is meant to tell us.

But if man's naming of things, which enables him to distinguish and relate them (in spite of nature's indifference), can look silly, and if that silliness can becloud with guilt and anguish an otherwise delightful experience, there is one thing more to be said of it. Without it there is no need to concentrate our powers, no need to struggle toward redeeming greatness. Without it Gregor would never have been Pope.

Now what, precisely, is the spiritual scheme which makes pos-

sible the foolishness, guilt and triumph of this novel? The question is answered in the monk's rueful observation that the aged Duchess, despite her sufferings, remained handsome and proud of gait, "the nobility of the flesh strangely reasserting itself against the abasement of the soul by reason of Christian consciousness of sin." With this the deepest aspect of the subject and theme begins to grow clear. But Mann's ultimate audacity has still not been mentioned. When Gregor cries out that he is a "monster," set off by his monstrous birth from all mankind, the abbot thus reassures him. "But no . . . you are *a child of man,* and a very dear one, even although not in the regular order. God is full of wonders. Very well can *love* come out of evil, and out of disorder something ordered for the best." (Italics mine.) When the royal mother addresses heaven in a prayer on the eve of her marriage to her son, she prays not directly to God, with whose perfect justice she does not stand well, but to Mary, Queen of Heaven — to a picture of the Annunciation, where also a woman is on the eve of a most irregular union. She speaks in verse, as do certain other characters at moments of passion, as though poetry — art — were a device for throwing dust into the eyes of the reason. And her prayer has the strange air of a demand for special consideration, on the startling grounds that Mary must have a special sympathy with her sin.

> For thou [she says] art of the Highest child, as are we creatures all, and yet art thou His mother mild and thus He all must do that she doth say and her obey. Somewhat thou ow'st to me, with woman's guile I said, that thou with God shouldst aid, since He for sinner's need in thy pure womb came in, and thee His mother made. Had never no one sin committed, ne'er had been what God with thee hath done, nor hadst thou everlasting praises won.

Finally: "A new task . . . have I to set your soul, but a merciful one," the Pope tells his mother at the end. "It is to grasp the three-in-oneness of child, spouse and Pope [i.e. father]." And surely there, if not before, the breathtaking parallel should leap into light. Not only is this novel about the human habit of imposing a spiritual scheme on the indifferent chaos of nature; and not only is it more particularly about the scheme known as Christianity. *The Holy Sinner* is a secular version of the story of Christ, as the old commentator, though not perfectly accurate, had divined, and the meaning of both stories is the same.

Is not Jesus the child and — as He is God — the Spouse and the

Father of Mary, Queen of Heaven? And though He is of high birth (none higher), is He not a child also of sinful humanity, without whose sin He would never have been born, and whose guilt He suffers His frightful penance to redeem? What, moreover, is the distinguishing character of His greatness? It is precisely Gregor's "bold way of enforcing the divine mercy in cases where the Deity would scarcely have come on it by Itself." This is a purpose understandable enough in view of His own questionable, mixed nature, and His "natural" desire to save His own parents. But if His holiness is partly "selfish," like Gregor's, it has also Gregor's justifying result. This is "to create the right measure in the life of the spirit," to mitigate for feeble man the crushing absoluteness of pure Deity, lest he despair — as well he might — and fall back entirely into the arms of the Devil.[5]

And does not this justification apply to art as well? Both art and Christianity exist to save us from the dominion of nature, of passions uncurbed by human law. These have their own joys, and even "dignity," but their realm, finally, is one in which the spirit of

---

[5] At this point in the argument certain intelligent readers my essay has already had have recoiled — as if the audacity were my own and not Mann's. Let me therefore add a bit more evidence that Mann intends us to see such a parallel. First, when the abbot (of the cloister Agonia Dei) learns from the tablet that the baby he has found is "brother and nephew and niece of its own parents," he reflects: "God had made our sin His own agony, sin and cross, they were one in Him, and above all He was the God of sinners. He therefore had consigned this stateless little scion to His stronghold of God's Passion as a state and status." Is it to mean nothing to us that the sin of Gregor's parents *too* becomes his agony, and that "God's Passion" becomes Gregor's "state and status"?

Second, when Gregor, no more inclined to shirk his coming agony than Christ had been, runs after the fisherman, who was about to leave him behind, he too staggers under the instruments needful for that agony—a leg-iron to chain him and a ladder to raise him up. "Carry it," cries the pitying fisherman's wife of the ladder, "as the Lord Christ His Cross."

Lastly, here is something to put beside the Duchess's ambiguous prayer. It is a poem uttered by Gregor shortly after his penance has ended and his glory begun.

> "Shall I find my life's black story
> Turn to lustre in Thy glory?
> With what wonder do I see,
> Lord, Thy heavenly alchemy
> Clear the flesh's shame and pain
> Back to purity again,
> To the spouse and son of sinning
> Highly from the Highest winning
> Leave for earthly need where'er
> To open Paradise's door!"

Since Christ, as a Son of fallen humanity, is necessarily a "son of sinning," and since Mary, the spouse of God (who is Christ), in spite of the Virgin Birth which indicates her personal purity, is human and a daughter of Eve, how can we fail to grant the double application of all the rest of this verse?

man cannot abide, for it is a realm of chaos. Yet the peculiar value of both art and Christianity is that while each stands firm against the chaos, they do not turn their backs on it completely. How should they? Not only would it be inhuman, for the human partakes of it; but each grows out of that chaos and lives on it — nature and passion are their "basis" and provide them with their special task.

And here we are ready to see that in one respect at least the tale's old commentator had been exactly right. That hot-headed ruler whom Gregor fought with over — or for — the Duchess, and whom he conquered by holding firm to the man's naked sword, Mann too has seen him as the Devil. And indeed, if the woman represents humanity, both in the divine incest and in the novel (where, in her fleshly weakness, she speaks out for nature, or prays for indulgence of it, and where, at the end, the flesh retains its dignity in her in spite of the soul's abasement); and if Gregor represents Christ — holiness born of sinful man, whose guilt he redeems; who *else* would Roger be? For he was "a prince," the monk remarks, "such as for my life I cannot bear, a shameless fellow. Even at fifteen years he had a pointed beard, eyes like burning coals, eyebrows arched like his moustache, and was tall, hairy, quarrelsome and gallant, a cockerel, a heart-breaker, a dueller, a devil of a fellow, to me quite unspeakable." No woman "less than fifty" was safe from this "cock and stallion," whose lust for the Duchess, however, was the great motive of his life, and who wished, we learn finally, to "increase his realm by adding hers." Gregor made him prisoner — and this is Mann's addition to the old tale, as has been said — because as such his power could be useful to the Duchess. Religion too, of course, would only harness the passions, not kill them, for it is they which give heat and energy — and even birth — to its higher purposes. And how does the Son and Champion of humanity fight His lawless Adversary? Brought into being by sin and for sin, He knows the Devil well enough to turn His own strength and weapons against him, though He must undergo the risk of intimate contact with them, must hold the sword firm in His bleeding hand. Exactly the same is true of the artist, that dealer in the passions, who uses their dangerous power to ensure a triumph which means their conquest and control. And so it is not strange that our narrator, our good artist-monk with the feelings always comically mixed, should have preferred, as he frankly confesses, to write of the sinful brother-sister pair, rather than of another he might have chosen, saintly from the beginning.

No meaning! *The Holy Sinner* is at least about the absurdity, the tragedy, and the glory of Christianity and of art. And the rest of what it means I must leave to others.

RICHARD F. HUGO:

West Marginal Way

One tug pounds to haul an afternoon
Of logs up-river. The shade
Of pigeon hill across the bulges
In the concrete crawls on reeds
In a short field, cools a pier
And the violence of young men
After cod. The crack-pot chapel
With a sign erased by rain returned
Before to calm and a mossed roof.

A dim wind blows the roses
Growing where they please. Lawns
Are wild and lots are undefined
As if the payment made in cash
Were counted then and there.

These names on boxes will return
With salmon money in the fall,
Come drunk down the cinder arrow
Of a trail, past the store of Popich,
Sawdust piles and the saw mill
Bombing air with optimistic sparks,
Blinding gravel pits and the brickyard
Baking to wives who taught themselves
The casual thirst of many summers
Wet in heat and taken by the sea.

Some places are forever afternoon.
Across the road and a short field
There is the river, split and yellow
And this far down affected by the tide.

PARKER TYLER:

Hymn to Apollo: 1954

I

Deep in man like a mountain and a mist for a tongue: the mouth like a movement; coiled in his cheek the snake of roses, and tooth by tooth as snug as music. Out like an airplane, his lips on the lips of horizon; and speaking. And speaking: the joyces of joy in the leafage, the cold fabulous books, the leaved mirrors and children: signs to provoke envy and wonder. The lock on the future, the lockjaw: the past. And the drum, the hairless drum, of the body; and the haired.

II

High in man like a hurdle: the humhum. And a heart for an arm, a teat for a clock. And the seesaw: the eyeball and eyeball: the coiffure of lashes and the army of looking. The army of long looking. And sickness and flabbiness: the age of his richness: adroop with magic.

III

Far in man and around him: the vest and the glove of idea. The glitter of his images. The flimsy statue of his footfall and the plitplat of poetry: the plitplat of poetry and his bed. There in the sleep of his history, wigging (like a carpet of orchids) the full-length, fat-chinned apollo of his forehead, his soul on one knee! The beat here, the beat there — faint! faint! — of his buttocks, his beauteous buttocks. And the lace: the lace of his women.

IV

Low in man, the thigh of his fingers a pink blur: a whte halo. The hand of his hips holding eternity. The wing of his waist — for he flies! — like a bursting bracelet of diamonds. The navel an untearing eye. The necklace on the neck of his middle broken: and a mussing of topaz, a bib of opal to be folded. And low on the ankle the lid of his socks, the ear of his instep: like a dream like a dream the sex: from wrist . . . from wrist . . .

V

The flash of sapphire from the mane: the nose like an initial: the head like a signature. Rising like an odor of ardors: weddinggown

of his bride that he touches. Alas! — and her blindness: her blindness of pearls. She-she. With her glamor: if Cleopatra's mask and the asp of aching and asking. Else: the hem of Dior, the faith of Fath.

VI

And then: then the dailiness. (! and her blindness). There in man, like a clove of garlic, the actress. There, anywhere on man, the garter of death. Anywhere in man, the elastic of death. The nip of the church.

VII

The urr. The ruff of birds. The sceptre of green. The crown the crown of butterflies. By his collar of crime, the necktie of song fits: in his necktie, the pin of the nightmare sticks: from his nightmare, the name of love gleams like a star in the night of his "tails": and on this: the lily.

VIII

Where is man? where is man? In the width of his walking and the length of the moon? The roundness of Einstein and the V of vomit? There, there! In the nowhere of nonesuch! And on this . . . and on this (like a profile) the lily.

IX

Back of man: the cross of the spine, the box of the angel, and on the box the address of gold, and on the gold the gold: and on this, the lily.

X

Like a hat on man the size of heaven, and swerving like a wheel on the hat, the short plume of God almost to the shoulder. And trembling: and trembling on this: the purple: and on the purple:

XI

Naked on man, the identity, and the personality nude to the knees. Naked on man, the daughters, the sons with their arms up, their skin off half. Naked on man: the fullface. And the baby climbing naked to the fistful of fatherhood. Naked to the armpit, the fatherhood. And below this: the slice of the lily. On this: the whole lily.

XII

And nowhere, nowhere about him, and not in him, unsuspected: crepitant: curled: science. Science: science. The commodity light as a womb, large as a memo. The commodity: shaped like a war, handsome as peace. Featureless as a radio. And fumbling: gorgeous and normal: and on this: and straight: twined with it:

XIII

The dove for the second time flew forth to explore the world devastated by the waters. And on the dove: the heel of the lily.

WILLIAM JAY SMITH:

Don Giovanni in Campagna

John was a Dago lumberjack;
He took delight in fallen trees,
A buxom wench, a smoking stack,
    The small amenities.

In stocking-cap of engine red
And shirt of watermelon green,
He loved whatever lay ahead,
    And hated what had been.

Maple, spruce, and gentle pine
He sawed and hacked and hacked and sawed;
While buzzards grazed the timberline,
    And lean wolves crouched and clawed.

He cleared away the virgin trees;
With ax erect he proudly stood
On towering peak: an eerie breeze
    Stirred in the ravaged wood.

He could not move, he could not speak,
He breathed in dust and tasted fire;
The northbound freight's inclement shriek
    Cut through the night like wire.

A buzzard — lank, suspended Z —
Lumbered, swooped; a redwood fell.
Earth divided: John could see
    (Too late) the Pit of Hell.

A Pavane for the Nursery

Now touch the air softly,
Step gently. One, two . . .
I'll love you till roses
Are robin's-egg blue;
I'll love you till gravel
Is eaten for bread,
And lemons are orange,
And lavender's red.

Now touch the air softly,
Swing gently the broom.
I'll love you till windows
Are all of a room;
And the table is laid,
And the table is bare,
And the ceiling reposes
On bottomless air.

I'll love you till Heaven
Rips the stars from his coat,
And the Moon rows away in
A glass-bottomed boat;
And Orion steps down
Like a diver below,
And Earth is ablaze,
And Ocean aglow.

So touch the air softly,
And swing the broom high.
We will dust the gray mountains,
And sweep the blue sky;
And I'll love you as long
As the furrow the plow,
As However is Ever.
And Ever is Now.

RALPH ROBIN:

Two Lives

The shutters of their lives are closing
    Against a world they never saw:
They spent their time in soft supposing.

"Is this — is this — is this the way?"
    He stutters to the closure-claw.
She cries, "It's day — it's day — it's day."

Foreclosure nails the shutters to
    And stuffs the cracks with dungy straw;
He keeps one crack for looking through.

But now, recovering their pride,
    They treat him like a lewd voyeur.
They call their dogs, "Come Hair, come Hide,
    We'll drive him into thorn and bur."

PETER HANKE:

The Exhibition

Twit twit! chirru! the never-quiet ones
Of all these painted once by Audubon
Proclaim to posthumous faces bending by.

Timeless, they sing a message into Time
The quiet others second: they inspire
Wonder at marooning artistry.

The quiet ones are either mute from shame —
Knowing their voices curst, they shrink to spoil
The trim salute with boom! plunk! gobble! honk! —

Or else, curst too but not admitting it
(The shameless of the aviary, proud
Of heart), are only mute from policy.

Thus, one would hoot, but courses the dark air
To drop on running mice; another would croak,
But, launched out at perhaps a lady-bug,

Bottles clamor up; would whoop, but spies
A paling lizard poised on a warm rock;
Would chuckle, but hops, harks, at a rotten stump.

Like moths, like grey balloons, the faces drift
Above the glass, wondering at this land
They cannot voyage to, hooray, alas.

DAVID MELVIN PAUL:

In Dream of Heights

In dream of heights, I saw the precipice,
in thought of beauty I was feared of thorns;
I saw God leaping in the antelope
until I thought of horns;
seen consequence inflicts my cowardice.

If all my word can do is sentence hope
and sight can serve me only to forebode
and all my wit is to afflict the obvious
and knot the rope,

From reasoning — that highest grief —
the tragedy of logic and the gift
of prophecy, that blasts the leaf,
deliver me, O God.

BERTOLT BRECHT:

Puntila: Two Episodes

English version by Gerhard Nellhaus and Richard Grenier [1]

Introductory Notes by Gerhard Nellhaus

Puntila is the history of a landowner and his hired-man, a folk play in nine episodes written in Finland in 1940,[2] and based on the tales and a dramatic sketch by Hella Wuolijoki. It may seem inappropriate, as Brecht writes in his *Notes on a Folk Play*[3] which are summarized here, to offer much discussion for a single, small play. But notes and observations are a necessary part of experiments, as Brecht labels his works — experiments in synthesizing a new art and style of theatre.

To revive the folk play, Brecht writes, seems impossible. Not only has it gone to seed but, what is worse, it never had a flowering. The revue, such as Auden and Blitzstein have written, is to the folk play what the latest popular tune is to the folk song. Yet by its existence the revue testifies to the need for a naive but not primitive, poetic but not romantic, realistic but not journalistically political theatre.

The new folk play, borrowing from the revue, might follow a sequence of relatively independent episodes, but offer more epic substance and be more realistic. What "epic" means to Brecht has been frequently and well discussed by Eric Bentley. Here in particular it might be taken as simply to mean basic history, economic, social, and moral. Lyricism and poetry, Brecht continues, ought to be inherent in the situations more than in what the figures, reacting to their situations, say. All this requires a new style of presentation, an art which is natural while mastering nature and a realism artistically evoked. To paint things rosy is base in itself, while to be truthful is unconditionally noble. Thus comedy depicting ordinary life can be ennobled by artistic truth. For the theatre commands the subtle shading, the agreeable and significant grouping, the fresh gesture, in brief, *style,* and the humor, fantasy, and wisdom to master the ugly. A play in prose, particularly in colloquial prose, such as *Puntila,*[4] with a rather simple "psychology" and not much of a "problem," will not easily achieve this new art.

To illustrate from *Puntila,* many of the ironic situations and speeches must be handled as if they were prose poems. Whether they are good prose poems or not is up to audience and actor to decide; what is important is that these

---

[1] Copyright in MS., The Library of Congress, 1950.

[2] The first Berlin presentation of *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti* was at the Deutsches Theater on November 11, 1949.

[3] *Versuche,* Heft 10. Suhrkamp Vlg., Berlin, 1950.

[4] The accent in the title, as in other Finnish proper names in the play, is on the first syllable.

passages should be treated as poems. The herring eulogized by Matti must be offered, as it were, upon a golden platter. The beauty of the situation (regardless of whether it is a grand or petty one) must be part of the stage picture, of the movement and the manner of expression. Without inviting a qualitative comparison, Brecht suggests that the scene in which Matti, the hired-man, subjects Eva, the landowner's daughter, to a series of tests to see how she would do as his wife, should be approached in tone and effect as if it were a casket-choosing scene from *The Merchant of Venice*. While not Shakespeare, the scene should have the quality of poetry. The difficulties of achieving this are never then to be underestimated.

In creating a figure the actor must give it stature. It might help the actor to realize that he has to create a representative national figure, and to do this requires a wide knowledge of mankind, genuine daring, and all of an actor's sensibilities. The role of Puntila, for example, must at no time and in no way lose its natural charm. It will require great artistry to make the drunken scenes poetic and delicate, varying and modulating them as much as possible; while the sober situations must never be grotesque or brutal. Practically this means to present *Puntila* in a style that contains elements of the *comedia dell'arte* and the realistic comedy of manners.

Like a true comedy of manners the play focuses on money, marriage, and mores. After each episode the cook comes on stage to sing a ballad summarizing what has passed and pointing the moral. Puntila is first met at a tavern, high as a lord, and having a kind of man-to-man talk with Matti about the problem of providing a dowry for his daughter Eva; the while she waits at home, bored with her fiancé. When Puntila finally gets back to his estate, Eva scolds and bosses him around, and takes from him his Aquavit. Undaunted, Puntila goes in search of more alcohol and, full again with life's joys, becomes engaged to four village maidens. Then he is off to the fair to hire laborers for the coming summer. Back on the estate Puntila is struck by an attack of soberness and grimly makes last-minute preparations for his daughter's engagement. It's a grim business all around as Eva and Matti, half in play and half in earnest, make-believe at a compromising situation in the hope of discouraging her fiancé. But the attaché, whose debts are greater than his love, will not easily give up so rich a prize as Eva. As a last fling and desperate measure Eva that night baits Matti to go "fishing" with her; but he won't bite. By contrast Puntila's four brides are sucker-bait. They come next day to celebrate the multiple engagement, only to be trodden on like worms. For, sober, Puntila *is* responsible or, as he puts it, liable to do anything; then he is half blind, seeing only his half of the world. Fortunately these attacks of being "stone cold sober" do not last long. Dissolved in Aquavit, Puntila's economic superego gives way to his better instincts. This is the rhythm of the eighth and ninth episodes, presented below.

But Puntila's cyclothymia is both parody and symbol. Superficially reminiscent of Chaplin's *City Lights,* here is a true, traditional German theme, Goethe's "two souls dwelling in one breast," presented *en face* as economic man and human being. Puntila's two selves are the real protagonists, creating the tension and the magnetism of the play. Matti and Puntila are not truly antagonists, for, looked at closely, Matti would just like to be in Puntila's place. The irony is that Matti stays sober to keep his job while Puntila gets drunk to keep his

humanity. Were Puntila always sober, as Matti always is, the play would have no more finesse, humor, or vitality than a political filibuster.

But Brecht did not intend *Puntila* to be propaganda; the politics herein are part of the reality of a feudal agrarian society in belated transition. The situation in which landowner, daughter, and hired-man find themselves keeps all from being free human beings. What Brecht is saying is not new. His way of saying it, however, is fresh and robust, full of vitality and good humor, and thus assured long life.

Episode VIII

Puntila Gives His Daughter's Hand to a Human Being

(The Puntila Estate. A large dining room decorated for a celebration. Two large chandeliers are burning brightly, and a cold buffet supper is laid out on tables stretching across the entire rear of the stage. A coffee service is set on several smaller tables to the left, and a single small table stands on the right. The Reverend, the Judge, and the Lawyer are standing on the left, smoking and drinking coffee. Puntila comes on from the right and goes to the small table. The Lawyer walks over to him and offers him a cup of coffee, but Puntila refuses and opens a bottle of Aquavit. From the next room can be heard French dance music of the nineteen-twenties.)

REVEREND: True faith is rarely found today. Instead, there is enough doubt and indifference to make one despair of our people. I am constantly recalling to their minds that without Him not one gooseberry would grow. Yet they take the fruits of Nature as something quite natural, and gobble them down as if it were the normal order of things. . . . Their unbelief can be attributed partly to the fact that they don't attend church, leaving me to preach to empty benches — as if there weren't enough bicycles to ride to church on. Every milkmaid has one. . . . Then, too, man is evil by nature. How else can I explain something like this: Last week I was talking to a peasant on his death-bed about what awaits man in the Great Beyond; and he asked me, "Do you think the potatoes will stand the rain?". . . . A thing like that makes me wonder if everything we do isn't waste down the drain.

JUDGE: I understand what you mean. Trying to instill culture in these louts is no picnic.

LAWYER: We lawyers don't have too easy a life either. We've always made our living from the peasants. In the old days, their iron character made them prefer to be beggars rather than give

up their rights. Now — they'd still like to insult each other, and stick knives in each other's ribs, and sell each other lame horses — but as soon as they realize that it's going to cost them money to go to court, they quickly lose their enthusiasm and drop the most beautiful lawsuit in the world, all for the love of Mammon.

JUDGE: That's the commercial age for you. Nowadays there's a certain shallowness about everything; the old values are disappearing. It's terribly difficult not to give the common people up in despair. But one must keep on trying, again and again, to bring a little culture into their lives.

(The Attaché enters with the Reverend's wife on his arm.)

REVEREND'S WIFE: Mr. Puntila, you really should pay some attention to your guests. His Excellency, the Foreign Minister, is dancing now with Miss Eva, but he's been asking for you.

JUDGE: That's true, Puntila. You ought to go look after the Minister.

(Puntila doesn't answer.)

ATTACHE: The Reverend's wife just gave a delightfully witty answer to His Excellency, the Minister. He asked her if she cared for jazz. In my whole life I'd never been in such suspense as to see how she'd solve the situation. But she answered with ready wit that as one couldn't dance to the church organ, it made little difference to her which instruments were used! His Excellency, the Minister, almost died from laughter. . . . What do you say to that, Puntila?

PUNTILA: Nothing. . . . I don't go around criticizing my guests. *(Beckons to the Judge.)* What do you think of that face, Frederick?

JUDGE: Which face?

PUNTILA: The Attaché's. Seriously now, what do you think?

JUDGE: Be careful, Johannes, the drinks are pretty strong.

ATTACHE *(humming the melody being played in the next room, and keeping time with his foot):* It goes to one's feet, *n'est-ce pas?*

PUNTILA *(again beckoning to the Judge, who has been avoiding answering his question):* Frederick! . . . Look at that face, Frederick, and give me your verdict.

JUDGE *(not answering Puntila):* Have any of you heard the joke about the Jew who went walking down the street with his duck? . . . It was during the war, and a policeman stopped him and said, "Jew! What do you feed that duck?" The Jew said, "I give him wheat." The policeman kicked him and said, "Jew! Don't you know that wheat is for the Army?" A few streets farther

on, another policeman stopped him and said, "Jew! What do you feed that duck?" The Jew answered softly, "I give him corn." The policeman kicked him and said, "Jew! Don't you know that corn is for the Army?" A little later still another policeman stopped him. "Jew!" said the policeman. "What do you feed that duck?" "Oh," said the Jew in a meek voice, "I give him a little money and let him buy what he wants."

(Everybody laughs but the Attaché.)

ATTACHE: . . . Was the duck trained?

(There is an uncomfortable silence.)

JUDGE: I don't think you quite get the point.

ATTACHE: Perhaps you'll have to explain it to me. If the duck was not specially trained, how could he take money to a shop and get the food?

PUNTILA *(in disgust):* Frederick.

JUDGE: You don't understand. My dear Eino, the whole point is that the Jew really didn't give the money to the duck at all.

ATTACHE: Oh, I see. He didn't really give the money to the duck. You forgot to mention that. . . . *(Gives a polite bray.)* Hahahaha. What a magnificent joke! The most ingenious joke I've ever heard.

PUNTILA *(gets to his feet gloomily):* I've got to do something about this. I don't have to put up with such an insect. . . . Frederick, you've refused to give a serious answer to the important question of what you'd think if I let such a face join my family. Well, I'm man enough to make a decision myself. . . . A man without a sense of humor is no man at all. *(To the Attaché.)* Leave my house! Yes, you. Don't turn around as if I meant someone else.

JUDGE: Puntila, you've gone too far.

ATTACHE: Gentlemen, I beg of you, please forget the incident. You have no idea how precarious is the position of a member of the Diplomatic Corps. The slightest shadow on his moral reputation may well cause the failure of an entire mission of state. In Paris, at Montmartre, the mother-in-law of the First Secretary of the Roumanian Legation thrashed her lover with an umbrella, and *instantly* there was a scandal.

PUNTILA: A grasshopper in tails!

ATTACHE *(harried):* Please understand! It's not that she had a lover — that's in perfectly good form. And it's not that she thrashed him — that's understandable enough. But to have done so with an umbrella! *That* is vulgar. Everything depends on the nuance.

LAWYER: He's right, Puntila.

JUDGE: His honor is very delicate.

REVEREND: He's in the Diplomatic Corps.

ATTACHE: As long as no names are mentioned, the situation is still amenable. It's only when insults *and* names are linked together that matters are beyond repair.

PUNTILA: Frederick, what am I going to do? I've forgotten his name — and according to what he says I'll never be able to get rid of him. . . . Now I remember! Thank God! I saw his name on a promissory note he once asked me to buy. It's *Eino Silakka.* Maybe he'll go now. What do you think?

ATTACHE *(taking recognition of the affront):* Gentlemen, a name has been mentioned. From this moment on every word must be weighed like gold.

PUNTILA *(in despair):* What can a man do? *(Roaring out suddenly.)* Get out of here! Never show your face on my estate again! I'm not going to give my daughter to a grasshopper in tails!

ATTACHE *(a last attempt):* Puntila, you're beginning to be offensive. If you throw me out of your house, you will be starting to cross that delicate line where a scandal begins.

PUNTILA *(in disgust):* That's too much. My patience is at an end. . . . *(To the Attaché.)* I had intended to let you know, between ourselves, that your presence was too much for my nerves, and that you had better leave; but you now force me to be very plain. . . . *Get the hell out, you shit-face!*

ATTACHE: Puntila, I am taking this amiss. . . . *(Starting to leave.)* If you'll excuse me, gentlemen?

PUNTILA *(running after him):* Don't be so slow! I want to see you run. I'll teach you to give me smart answers!

LAWYER *(as he and the Reverend chase after Puntila):* And all in front of witnesses!

REVEREND'S WIFE *(to the Judge):* There'll be a scandal.

(Eva comes in, singing, "Je cherche après Titine, Titine, ah, Titine — ")

EVA: — What's wrong? What's all the noise about in the courtyard?

REVEREND'S WIFE *(going toward Eva):* My dear child, something frightful has happened. You must fortify yourself with all the strength of your soul.

EVA: Well, what happened?

JUDGE *(bringing her a glass of sherry):* Drink this, Eva. . . . Your

father drank a whole bottle of Aquavit; then he took a sudden dislike to Eino's face and chased him out of the house.

EVA *(sings)*: "Je cherche après Titine, Titine—"

(The Reverend returns.)

REVEREND: It's dreadful. Simply dreadful.

REVEREND'S WIFE: What? What's happened?

REVEREND: There was a terrible scene in the yard. He threw stones after him.

EVA: Did he hit him?

REVEREND: I don't know. The Doctor came between them. With the Minister right in the house!

EVA: Now I'm pretty certain he'll stay away, Uncle Frederick. It's a good thing we got the Minister to come. Without him the scandal wouldn't have been half so big.

REVEREND'S WIFE: Eva!

(Puntila comes back in, followed by Matti, the Cook, and the Kitchen-maid.)

PUNTILA: Matti! Fina! Laina! I have just looked deep into the depravity of this world. . . . It's been a long time since I decided to marry my daughter to Matti Altonen: a capable chauffeur, a real man, and my friend.—Let's all drink to the happy pair. . . . I went into that room *(pointing)* with the best of intentions. I went to announce that a mistake had been made, that I'd almost given my only daughter's hand to a grasshopper, and that I was hastening to give her to a human being. What do you think they did? The Minister, who is supposed to be a cultivated man, looked at me as if I were a toadstool and called for his car. And the others followed suit like monkeys. . . . It was sad. I felt like a Christian martyr before the lions. I couldn't keep it to myself; I had to tell the Minister what I thought. He was leaving fast, but luckily I caught him in front of his car and told him that he was a shitface, too! I trust I spoke for all of you.

MATTI: Mr. Puntila, I think we ought to go into the kitchen and discuss the whole thing over a bottle of Aquavit.

PUNTILA: Why in the kitchen? We haven't even celebrated your engagement! We've only celebrated the *wrong* engagement, a mistake. . . . Put all the tables together. Set them up for a banquet. We'll celebrate! *(Puntila sits down in the middle of the room and waits as they set up the banquet table before him.)* Sit down now, all of you. Fina, here next to me. Laina, sit down. Reverend, you sit down next to Fina. And you, madame *(to the Reverend's wife)*

next to the cook; you'll have to be the hostess. You sit at the head of the table, Frederick. And you too, Matti; sit down to a decent table for once. Eva, here.

(They seat themselves in their assigned places. There is silence.)

PUNTILA *(to the Cook):* Laina, stop moving the bottles around and sit down on your ass.

REVEREND'S WIFE *(to the Cook):* Have you put up your mushrooms this year?

COOK *(coldly):* I don't put them up. I dry them.

REVEREND'S WIFE: How do you do that?

COOK: I cut them into big pieces, string them up, and hang them in the sun.

PUNTILA *(rises):* I'd like to say something about my daughter's fiancé. . . . Matti, I have studied you secretly and gained insight into your character. I'm not talking about how the machines have all been in order since you've been here on the Estate. No, it's the man in you that I'm honoring now. . . . I haven't forgotten what happened this morning. I noticed the way you looked as I stood on the balcony like Nero and, in my blindness and error, chased those dear guests out onto the dusty road.* I've told you before about my attacks. During dinner—as you might have noticed—or during the time you weren't there—as perhaps you guessed—I sat quietly sunk into myself, picturing in my mind how those four women must be dragging themselves back to Kurgela on foot. They didn't even get a drink of punch, only rough words. I wouldn't be surprised if they lost faith in Puntila. . . . I'm asking you now: can you forget that, Matti? *(Sits down.)*

MATTI: Mr. Puntila, consider everything forgotten. But you'd better tell your daughter, with all the weight of your authority, that she's not to marry a chauffeur.

REVEREND: Absolutely right.

EVA: Papa, Matti and I had words with each other. He won't believe that you'll give us a sawmill, and he thinks I couldn't stand living with him as just the wife of a chauffeur.

PUNTILA: What do you say to that, Frederick?

JUDGE: Don't ask me, Johannes. And don't look at me like a dying deer; ask Laina.

PUNTILA: Laina, I'm asking you if you think me capable of

---

* In an earlier scene, Puntila being drunk got himself engaged to marry four village women. When they all arrived at the Estate to claim him he was sober again and drove them away.

stinting with my daughter, and if you think a sawmill and a steam-mill — and a wood as well — are too little for her.

COOK *(interrupted in the whispered conversation she has been holding with the Reverend's Wife):* I'd be glad to fix you some coffee, Mr. Puntila.

(Eva, a little drunk, stands up to make a speech.)

EVA: Dear Matti, please make me your wife so I can have a man like other women. And if you want, we'll go off right now to catch crayfish,** and without a net. I really don't think as much of myself as you think I do, and I could live with you even if we were a little short of money.

PUNTILA: Bravo!

EVA: But if you don't want to go catching crayfish because you think I'm not taking things seriously enough, I'll pack a little bag and go with you to see your mother. My father won't object.

PUNTILA: On the contrary, I'll be glad. *(Eva sits down.)*

MATTI *(rises in his turn and rapidly drinks down two glasses):* Miss Eva, I can be gotten to do all sorts of foolish things, but I can't take you to my mother's. The old woman might have heart failure. Why, at best there'd only be a couch for you. *(Turns.)* Reverend, tell Miss Eva what a poor cottager's kitchen with a bed in it looks like.

REVEREND *(gravely):* Most depressing. *(Matti sits down.)*

EVA: Why describe it? I'll see for myself.

MATTI: — And you'll be asking my old mother for a bath!

EVA: I'll go to the public steam bath.

MATTI: With the pay I get from Mr. Puntila? You've still got the owner of a sawmill in your head. . . . That'll all come to nothing because Mr. Puntila is a sensible man when he's himself — and he'll be himself again tomorrow morning.

PUNTILA: Don't go on! Don't talk about the Puntila who is our common enemy! That Puntila was drowned tonight in a bottle of Aquavit, that terrible man; and here I stand, converted into a human being. Let everyone drink, act like free human beings! Let there be no despair!

MATTI: I'm telling you that I can't take you to my mother's.

** In order to break off her match with the Attaché, Eva has tried to get caught in various compromising situations with Matti. Even last night she put on a scanty costume and invited him to the shore to help her catch crayfish. She backed out of it, however, when he made it plain that "catching crayfish" was to him a metaphor for something quite different and "very nice."

She'd beat my ears with her slippers if I dared to bring home such a wife, if you want to know the truth.

EVA: Matti, you shouldn't have said that.

PUNTILA: I think you're going too far myself, Matti. Eva has her faults, and maybe some day she'll get a little fat like her mother — though not before she's thirty or thirty-five — but now she can show herself wherever she likes.

MATTI: I'm not talking about her getting fat; I'm talking about her not being practical — and how she'd never make a wife for a chauffeur.

REVEREND: Precisely what I think.

MATTI: Don't laugh, Miss Eva; you'd soon stop laughing if my mother tried you out. You'd feel pretty small.

EVA: Let's try, Matti. I'm your chauffeur's wife. Tell me what I have to do.

PUNTILA: Good idea! Bring in the sandwiches, Fina. We'll have a nice little meal, and Matti will test Eva till she's blue in the face.

MATTI: Stay where you are, Fina. We don't have servants around when guests drop in on us. And we don't have anything to eat but what we usually have. Bring in the herring, Eva.

EVA *(running off gaily):* No sooner said than done.

PUNTILA *(calling after her):* Don't forget the butter! *(To Matti.)* I'm glad you decided to make yourself independent, and not to accept anything from me. Not everyone would do that.

REVEREND'S WIFE *(to Cook):* But I don't put the mushrooms in salt water; I cook them with lemon and butter. They should be as small as buttons. I put up morels, too.

COOK: Those aren't very delicate, but they have a nice flavor. The only really delicate mushrooms are the champignon and the yellow boletus.

EVA *(bringing back a herring on a silver platter):* In our kitchen, we don't have any butter. Am I right? Here's the herring.

MATTI *(taking the platter):* Ah, there he is. How well I know him. I saw his brother only yesterday, and his cousin the day before, and back through many other members of his family since I've been old enough to reach for a plate. *(To Eva.)* How many times a week will you want to eat herring?

EVA: Three times, Matti, if I have to.

COOK *(to Eva):* You'll have to eat him more than that, whether you want to or not.

MATTI *(to Eva):* You have a lot to learn. My mother, who's a cook,

too, serves herring to the help five times a week, and Laina serves it eight times. . . . *(Rising, he lifts up the herring by the tail, and addresses it ceremoniously.)* Welcome, O Herring, feeder of the poor! You, the appeaser of our hunger at any time of day, the salty pain in our intestines. From the sea you have come, and into the earth you will go. You are the force that drives the machines called working-men and working-women — machines that do not yet have perpetual motion. O Herring, you dog! If it weren't for you, we might start to ask for ham — and what would happen to Finland then? *(Matti puts the herring on the platter and cuts it up, then takes it around the table and offers everyone a piece.)*

PUNTILA: To me it tastes like a delicacy, because I rarely eat it. . . . Such a difference shouldn't exist. If I had my way, all the income from the estate would go into one box; and whenever any of the help needed anything, they could take what they wanted — because without them, there wouldn't be anything there to begin with. Am I right?

MATTI: I wouldn't advise it. You'd be ruined in no time, and the bank would take over.

PUNTILA: That's what you say but I don't agree with you. When you come right down to it, I'm really a radical — if I were a hired-man, I'd make Puntila's life a hell. . . . Go on with the examination. I'm interested.

MATTI: When I think of what a woman has to know before I'd show her to my mother, right away I think of my socks. *(He pulls off one of his boots, then removes his sock and gives it to Eva.)* Could you mend this, for example?

(Eva promptly leaves to get a needle and thread.)

JUDGE: That's asking a great deal. I didn't say anything about the herring, but the love of Juliet for Romeo might not have stood such a demand as the darning of his socks. A love which is capable of such self-sacrifice might easily become uncomfortable as well, because its nature would be too intense. It could also very well end in a legal dispute.

MATTI: With poor people, socks aren't darned for the sake of love, but to save money.

REVEREND: I don't think that the holy sisters who raised her in Brussels ever considered this eventuality.

(Eva returns with needle and thread and begins to darn the sock.)

MATTI *(to the Reverend)*: What they neglected in her education, she's got to catch up on now. *(To Eva.)* I don't hold your ignorance

against you as long as you're willing. You had bad luck in your choice of parents and never learned anything sensible. The herring already showed us what huge gaps there are in your education. I've picked the sock on purpose, so I could really find out what was in you.

FINA *(helpfully):* I could show Miss Eva how.

PUNTILA *(who has gotten up to watch Eva working):* Pay attention there, Eva. You've got a good head on you. This time you've got to prove yourself.

(Eva finishes and, with hesitation, gives Matti the sock. He lifts it up, then smiles wryly as he tries to insert his hand. The sock has been hopelessly sewn together.)

MATTI: Ignorance. *(To the Judge, who is laughing.)* Don't laugh. My sock's ruined. *(To Eva.)* If you wanted to marry a chauffeur, this would be a tragedy; because you'd have to stretch things really hard to make both ends meet — and they're pretty far apart, you'd be surprised. But I'll give you another chance. *(He drags one of the parts of the banquet table some distance to one side.)* Chair!

EVA *(bringing over a chair, apologetically):* I admit I didn't do so well with the sock.

MATTI: Now let's say I'm a chauffeur. You help out around the estate — with the washing and, in the winter, with keeping the stoves going. . . . I come home at night. What do you do?

EVA: I'll do better this time, Matti. Come home!

(Matti walks away a few steps, then turns around and acts as if he is entering the door as he comes home.)

EVA: Matti! *(She runs to him and gives him a kiss.)*

MATTI: First mistake. Intimacies and dilly-dallying when I come home tired.

(Matti acts out going to the water faucet and washing his hands and face; then, as if blinded with soap, he stretches out his hand for a towel.)

EVA *(not understanding, starts to chat):* Poor Matti, are you tired? I've been thinking the whole day about how hard you have to work. I wish I could do the work for you.

FINA *(hissing):* A towel! *(Hands Eva a napkin.)*

EVA *(sadly, realizing her mistake):* Excuse me, I didn't understand what you wanted.

(Matti sits down by the table he has dragged to one side. He sticks out his boots to Eva.)

PUNTILA *(gets up and watches intently):* Pull!

(Eva pulls extra-hard at one boot. Suddenly it comes off and she falls on the floor.)

REVEREND: I consider this a very sound lesson. All this is most unnatural.

MATTI: I don't always have you do this, but today I had to drive the tractor and I'm half dead. You've got to expect things like that. . . . What did you do today?

EVA *(still on the floor):* Wash, Matti.

MATTI: How many pieces did they give you to do?

EVA: Four. All double sheets.

MATTI: Fina, tell her.

FINA: You've done at least seventeen sheets and two big tubs of colored wash.

MATTI: Did you get the water from a hose? Or did you have to carry it in a bucket because the hose leaks? — like on that Puntila place.

PUNTILA: Give it to me good and hard, Matti. I'm a terrible man.

EVA: I had to use a bucket.

MATTI *(lifts up her hand):* You broke your nails again scrubbing the wash, or making the fire. You'd better make a habit of putting some fat on your hands. My mother's have swollen up like this *(demonstrating),* and gotten all red. . . . You're probably tired, but my work-clothes still have to be washed. I need them clean for tomorrow.

EVA: Yes, Matti.

MATTI: They'll be nice and dry by tomorrow morning, and you won't need to get up to iron them before 5:30.

(Matti gropes for something on the table next to him.)

EVA *(alarmed):* What is it?

FINA *(whispers):* The paper.

(Eva jumps up and pretends to hold a newspaper out to Matti. He doesn't take it, but continues to grope gloomily on the table.)

FINA: On the table!

(Eva finally puts the newspaper down on the table. Matti then leans back, and acts as if he is reading it.)

EVA: I fixed up my apron and put a little color in it. See? You can always have a little color without it costing too much; you only have to know how. How do you like it, Matti?

(Matti, disturbed in his reading, lowers his newspaper and looks at Eva in silence. She looks back, intimidated.)

FINA *(whispers):* Don't talk when he's reading the paper.

MATTI *(rising):* There. You see?

PUNTILA: I'm disappointed in you, Eva.

MATTI *(almost pityingly):* Everything's missing. Not wanting to eat herring more than three times a week. No darning-egg for the sock. And when I come home at night, not enough sense to keep her mouth shut. . . . *(To Eva.)* Then they call me in the middle of the night to fetch the old man from the station. What then?

EVA: I'll show you. *(She goes to the window and shouts excitedly.)* What? In the middle of the night? When my husband just got home and needs his sleep? That's the end! Let that souse sleep off his drunk in the gutter. Before I let my man go out tonight, I'll hide his pants.

PUNTILA *(to Matti):* That's good, you'll have to admit it!

EVA *(continuing):* Getting people out of bed when it's time to sleep! As if they weren't worked to the bone all day long! My husband comes home and falls into bed like a dead man. I'm giving notice! . . . *(To Matti)* Is that better?

MATTI *(laughing):* That's pretty good, Eva.—I mean, they'll give me notice—but if my mother saw it, she'd be convinced. *(Jokingly, he slaps Eva on the behind. She tries to dodge away and, for a moment, is speechless.)*

EVA *(furious):* Stop that!

MATTI: What's the matter?

EVA: How dare you hit me there?

JUDGE: I'm afraid, Eva, that despite everything, you've finally failed the examination.

PUNTILA *(to Eva):* What's wrong with you?

MATTI: Are you insulted? I shouldn't have slapped you there, is that it?

EVA: Papa, I don't think it will work out.

REVEREND: True.

PUNTILA: What do you mean, you "don't think it will work out"?

EVA *(sarcastically):* I realize, now, that I received the wrong education. I think I'll go upstairs.

PUNTILA: Matti.

MATTI: Mr. Puntila.

PUNTILA: I'll have to do something about this. Eva, sit down, over there. *(Pointing to her place at the table.)*

EVA: Papa, I think I'd better go. I'm sorry the engagement wasn't successful. Good night. *(Walks out.)*

PUNTILA: Eva!

(The Reverend and the Judge start to leave. The Cook and the Reverend's Wife, however, are still talking about mushrooms.)

REVEREND'S WIFE: You've almost convinced me, but I still feel safer putting them up. Though I peel them first.

COOK: Why do that? All you have to do is wash the dirt off.

REVEREND: Come along, Anna, it's getting late.

PUNTILA: Matti, I'm through with her. Here I got her a man, a splendid example of a human being — someone to make her happy, so she could get up every morning like a lark. But she's too fine for all that! . . . I cast her off. *(He runs to the door.)* I disown you! Pack up your rags and get out of my house! Do you think I didn't notice how you almost took the Attaché just because I ordered you to? You don't have any character. You dishrag, you! You aren't my daughter anymore!

REVEREND: Mr. Puntila, you've lost control of yourself.

PUNTILA: Leave me alone. Go do your preaching in church where there's nobody to hear!

REVEREND: If you'll excuse me, Mr. Puntila. . . . Anna!

PUNTILA: Yes. Go away — leaving behind you a father bent with grief! . . . How did I ever come to have the kind of a daughter who'd commit sodomy with a diplomatic grasshopper? Any milkmaid could tell her why the good Lord created her hind-end in the sweat of His brow! *(To the Judge.)* And you didn't open your mouth once to try to drive all those unnatural things out of her! Get out of here!

JUDGE: That's enough, now, Puntila. . . . You can't bother me. I wash my hands in innocence. *(Leaves quickly.)*

PUNTILA *(calling after him):* You've been doing that for thirty years now, Frederick! You used to have the hands of a peasant before you became a judge — and started washing your hands in innocence!

REVEREND *(trying to draw his wife away from her conversation with the Cook):* It's time to go, Anna.

REVEREND'S WIFE: No, I don't put them in cold water. And I don't cook the stems. How long do you let them cook?

COOK: I just let them boil up once.

REVEREND: I'm waiting, Anna.

REVEREND'S WIFE: I'm coming. . . . I let them cook ten minutes, myself.

(The Reverend goes out shrugging his shoulders.)

PUNTILA *(back at the table):* Those aren't human beings. I don't consider them human.

MATTI: Forgive me for patting your daughter on the behind, Mr. Puntila. That wasn't part of the examination. I only meant it to encourage her, but it showed the gulf between us. You saw it yourself.

PUNTILA: There's nothing to forgive, Matti. I don't have a daughter anymore. . . . Sit down with me and have a drink.

MATTI: . . . Don't be hardhearted, Mr. Puntila. *(To the Reverend's Wife and the Cook, who are both getting up.)* Did you at least come to an agreement about the mushrooms?

REVEREND'S WIFE *(leaving):* And you put in the salt right at the beginning?

COOK: Right at the beginning.

(The Cook goes out with the Reverend's Wife, leaving Puntila, Matti, and Fina still sitting at the banquet table.)

PUNTILA *(reflectively):* I liked that, when you were testing her out — you know? . . .

(Puntila takes a drink, and all three sit for a while in silence.)

PUNTILA: . . . Listen, they're still dancing down by the pond.

A VOICE *(singing in the distance):*

There once was a countess in Sweden's great land.
She was so lovely and white.
"Gamekeeper, Gamekeeper, my garter came off —
It is off, it is off.
Gamekeeper, kneel down, and tie it on right."

"O Countess, my Countess, don't look at me so.
I willingly serve for my bread.
Your breasts are snow-white, but the headman's ax cold —
It is cold, it is cold.
'Tis sweet to be loved — but bitter to be dead."

(Matti rises and walks around the table to Fina. He takes her in his arms and, as the song continues, they dance together — slowly dancing out of the room.)

The gamekeeper fled her that very same night.
In haste he rode down to the sea.
"O boatman, O boatman, take me in your boat —
In your boat, in your boat —
Boatman, I must flee to the end of the sea."

'Twas the love of a vixen and a cock.
"Golden Cockerel, do you truly love me?"
Oh, the evening was fine, but then in the morn —
In the morn, in the morn
His feathers lay scattered under a tree.

PUNTILA: That song was meant for me. Songs like that touch me deeply.

(Curtain. Musicians. The table that Matti had dragged aside during the banquet remains in front of the curtain. The Cook comes on with a pile of dishes, sets them on the table, and dries them as she sings.)

COOK: Mr. Puntila on the engagement day
Against the Attaché rails.
He says, "Can I give my child away
To a grasshopper in tails?"
The master then asks his hired-man
To take her, please, for his wife.
The hired-man says, "How can I when
She'd be no help in my life?
She'd be no help —
She'd be no help —
She'd be no help in my life?"

Episode IX

Puntila and Matti Climb Mt. Hatelma

(The billiard room on the Puntila Estate. At the left, a locked gun cabinet; at the right, a small table and three chairs with white slip-covers; and in the background, a grandfather clock. Puntila, with a wet cloth around his head, is sitting next to the billiard table. Laina, the Cook, stands beside him with a pan of water and another cloth.

FINA *(coming in):* The Reverend and the lawyer for the Dairy Association are here to see you.

PUNTILA: I don't want to see anybody. My head's splitting. I think I'm getting pneumonia. Bring them in.

(Fina escorts in the Reverend and Lawyer, and then leaves.)

LAWYER: Good morning, Johannes.

REVEREND: Good morning, Mr. Puntila. I hope you slept well.

We just happened to meet in the street, and thought we'd drop by to see you.

LAWYER: It was a night of misunderstandings, so to speak, wasn't it?

PUNTILA: I've already telephoned Eino, if that's what you mean. He excused himself, and that was the end of that.

LAWYER: There is one point that remains to be considered, however. In so far as the events of last night involve only your own family life and your dealings with members of the government, they're completely your own affair. But, unfortunately, there are matters which are not.

PUNTILA: Don't keep beating around the bush, Pekka. If any damage has been done, I'll pay for it.

REVEREND: Most regrettably, my dear Mr. Puntila, there are damages which cannot be rectified with money. In short, we have come as friends to speak to you about the Surkela affair.

PUNTILA: What about Surkela?

REVEREND: At one time, we heard you express your intention to discharge this man because he, as an agitator — as you yourself emphasized — exercises a most pernicious influence upon the community.

PUNTILA: I said I'd kick him out.

REVEREND: Yesterday, Mr. Puntila, was the terminal date for giving notice. But you didn't give Surkela notice, otherwise I wouldn't have seen his eldest daughter yesterday at holy services.

PUNTILA: What? He didn't get his notice? Laina! Didn't Surkela get his notice?

COOK: No.

PUNTILA: Why?

COOK: When you came back from the market with the laborers, instead of giving him notice, you begged his pardon and gave him ten marks hand-money.

PUNTILA: What nerve of him to take ten marks from me — after I'd told him a dozen times that he'd have to leave the first of the month. . . . Fina! *(Fina runs in.)* Call Surkela right away. . . . I've got a terrible headache.

(Fina goes off. The Cook puts a new compress on his head.)

LAWYER: It's the coffee.

PUNTILA: Right you are, Pekka, I must have been drunk. . . . I'm always doing stupid things when I've had a drink too many. I could tear my head off. That Surkela belongs in prison. He took advantage of me.

REVEREND: I'm convinced of it, Mr. Puntila. All of us know you as a man whose heart is in the right place. All this could only have happened at a time when you were under the influence of drink.

PUNTILA: This is terrible. Do be seated, gentlemen. *(The Reverend and the Lawyer seat themselves, and Puntila continues despairingly.)* What am I going to tell the Knights of Finland? It's a matter of honor. If the story gets around, I'll be ostracized. Nobody will buy my milk anymore. *(The Reverend puts his hand on Puntila's shoulder consolingly.)* It's all the fault of that Matti, my chauffeur. I can see that. He knows very well that I can't stand Surkela, and still he let me give him ten marks hand-money.

REVEREND: There's no need for you to take the affair too tragically, Mr. Puntila. Things like this can happen, you know.

PUNTILA: Don't try to excuse me by talking about what "can" happen. If things keep up like this I'll have to give up my legal powers. — I can't drink up all my own milk; I'm ruined! — Don't just sit around, Pekka! You'll have to do something about this immediately; you're the lawyer for the Dairy Association. . . . I'll make a donation to the Knights of Finland. *(To the Cook.)* It's liquor that causes all this. It's ruining me! — More coffee!

LAWYER: All right. Then you'll pay Surkela off and let him go. He's got to leave; he's poisoning the atmosphere.

PUNTILA: Anything.

REVEREND: I think we'll say goodbye now, Mr. Puntila. No damage is irreparable where there is good-will. Good-will is everything, Mr. Puntila.

PUNTILA *(shaking his hand sadly):* I thank you.

REVEREND: You've nothing to thank us for; we're only doing our duty. And let us all be prompt and effective in its performance.

LAWYER *(turning to Puntila once more as he leaves):* And I suggest you make a few inquiries about your chauffeur. He seems somewhat questionable, too.

(The Reverend and the Lawyer leave.)

PUNTILA: Laina, I'll never touch another drop again, never in my life. . . . This morning, when I woke up, I lay there thinking what a curse liquor is. I decided to go into the cow-barn to make a resolution. I love my cows, and what I resolve to do in their presence, I keep to. . . . *(Grandly.)* Bring me all the bottles in the cabinet right away, all of them, and the rest of the liquor that's around the house. I'm going to smash every single bottle to pieces.

— And don't tell me how expensive they are! Think of the good of the Estate.

COOK: Yes, Mr. Puntila, but are you sure you want to?

PUNTILA: This business with Surkela — my not putting him out on the street — is enough of a lesson to me. . . . Have that chauffeur come here, too! He's my evil spirit.

COOK: Poor Surkela. His family has just finished unpacking, and now they'll have to pack all over again.

(The Cook runs off. Surkela and his children come in.)

PUNTILA *(taking the compress from his head and getting up):* I didn't say anything about bringing your brats. I have to square my accounts with you.

SURKELA: That's what I thought, Mr. Puntila; that's why I brought them along. They can listen, it won't hurt them.

(There is a pause. Matti enters.)

MATTI: Good morning, Mr. Puntila. How's your headache?

PUNTILA: There you are, you son-of-a-bitch. What's this I heard about you? What have you done behind my back now? Didn't I warn you only yesterday that I'd throw you out and not give you a letter of reference?

MATTI: Yes, Mr. Puntila.

PUNTILA: Shut up. I've had enough of your insolence and back-talk. My friends opened my eyes to you. How much did Surkela pay you?

MATTI: I don't know what you're talking about, Mr. Puntila.

PUNTILA: I suppose now you're going to deny that you and Surkela have been working together. You're pretty much of a troublemaker yourself. You knew how to stop me from getting rid of him in time.

MATTI: I'm sorry to differ with you, Mr. Puntila, but I only carried out your orders.

(All this time, Fina and the Cook have been bringing in bottle after bottle.)

PUNTILA: You should have seen for yourself that those orders made no sense!

MATTI: I'm sorry, but your orders aren't so easy to tell apart as you like to think. If I only carried out the orders that made sense, you'd fire me for being lazy and not doing any work.

PUNTILA: Don't be so smart, you thief! You know perfectly well I won't stand for people on my estate who stir up the men to a point where they won't go into the peat bogs if they don't have an egg for breakfast! And you're one of the same kind. . . . When

I do something like not giving Surkela notice, it's because of liquor — now I'll have to give him three months' pay to get rid of him — but with *you* it's all calculated! . . . *(To the Cook.)* But this time I'm in dead earnest, Laina. You can tell because I'm not satisfied with making a resolution. No, I'm actually going to destroy all my liquor! Unfortunately, I've never gone this far on former occasions. That's why I always had liquor around where it could tempt me when I grew weak. That was the root of all the evil. I once read, "The first step to sobriety is: Don't buy any liquor." That's much too little known. — But if you already have some liquor, then the first step is to destroy it! *(To Matti.)* I'm purposely having you, above all, watch. That will really put the fear of God into you.

MATTI: Yes, Mr. Puntila. Do you want me to smash the bottles out in the yard for you??

PUNTILA: No, I'll do it myself, you swindler. You'd really like that, wouldn't you? — getting rid of this beautiful schnapps *(He lifts a bottle to examine it.)* by swilling it down yourself.

COOK: Don't look at the bottle too long, Mr. Puntila. Throw it out the window.

PUNTILA: Absolutely right. *(He threatens Matti with the bottle.)* You'll never get me to drink schnapps again, you bastard. You're only happy when you have everybody wallowing around you like pigs. You don't know what it is really to love your work; you wouldn't move one little finger if you wouldn't starve otherwise — you parasite! All you know how to do is to fasten yourself onto me like a leech, and tell me your dirty stories all night, and get me to insult my guests — because you're only happy when everyone's down in the dirt where you are! The police should be the ones to handle you. I have your own confession of why you were thrown out of every job you ever had. And I caught you agitating with those women from Kurgela. You're a destructive element! *(Absent-mindedly, Puntila begins to pour himself a glass out of the bottle he's been holding.)* You're full of hate for me, and you'd like nothing better than for me to be fooled by your "Yes, Mr. Puntila; yes, Mr. Puntila." *(He raises the glass.)*

COOK *(horrified):* Mr. Puntila!

PUNTILA: Oh, don't worry. I'm only trying it out to make sure the shopkeeper didn't cheat me again, and because I'm celebrating my irrevocable resolution. *(The Cook goes out. Puntila continues to Matti.)* But I saw right through you from the first minute — and kept watching you, waiting for you to betray yourself. That's

why I kept drinking with you, so that you wouldn't notice anything. *(He takes another drink.)* It was my friends that opened my eyes to you; for that I have to thank them. I'll drink this glass to your health. . . . I shudder when I think back on that life: three days in the Park Hotel, and then the search for liquor and those women from Kurgela. What a life without rhyme or reason.— When I think of the milkmaid that morning! She tried to take advantage of the fact that I'd been drinking — and that she had a big bosom. I think her name was Lisu. . . . And you, you loafer, always tagging along. You'll have to admit those were good times. But I'm not going to give you my daughter, you pig-head! . . . *(Drinking.)* You're not a shit-head, though, I'll have to admit that.

(The Cook comes in with more bottles.)

COOK: But you're drinking again, Mr. Puntila!

PUNTILA: Me drinking? You call this drinking — a bottle or two? *(He takes a new bottle, and holds the one he has just emptied out to the Cook.)* Destroy this one. Smash it. I never want to see liquor again; I told you that. And don't look at me the way our Lord did at St. Peter. I can't stand petty insistence on every little word a man says. *(Pointing at Matti.)* That one drags me down, but *you* want me to grow stale, and chew the nails on my feet from boredom. What kind of a life do I have here, anyway? *(Fina brings in more bottles.)* Nothing but driving people all day long, and figuring out what the fodder costs for the cows. Get out of here, you Lilliputians! *(He chases out Fina and the Cook.)* Petty minds. . . . No imagination. *(To Surkela's children.)* Steal, rob, be Reds — but never be Lilliputians. That's Puntila's advice. *(To Surkela.)* Excuse me for interfering with the education of your children. *(To Matti.)* Open this bottle.

MATTI: I hope this Aquavit is good, and not all watered-down the way it was the other day. You have to be careful about what you buy from Uskala, Mr. Puntila.

PUNTILA: I know, and carefulness is my rule. At first I always take a very small swallow, so I can spit it out right away if I notice anything peculiar. If it weren't for my habitual carefulness, I'd drink the worst rot. For God's sake, Matti, take a bottle for yourself. I intend to celebrate all my decisions, because they're irrevocable — which is always a calamity. . . . Your health, Surkela!

MATTI *(indicating Surkela):* That means they can stay, Mr. Puntila?

PUNTILA: Do we have to talk about things like that — now that we're by ourselves? Matti, I'm disappointed in you. Staying on

here isn't enough for Surkela. The Puntila Estate is too small for him; he doesn't like it here. I can understand that. If I were in his shoes, I'd feel the same way. For me, Puntila would be just a rich landowner, and you know what I'd do with him? I'd put him down in a salt mine so he could learn what it means to work — that leech! Am I right, Matti?

MATTI: Yes, Mr. Puntila.

PUNTILA: Surkela, agree with me. Don't be polite.

SURKELA'S ELDEST CHILD: But we *want* to stay, Mr. Puntila.

PUNTILA: No, no. Surkela is going and a hundred horses couldn't hold him back. *(He goes to the table and takes some money out of the drawer; then gives it to Surkela, keeping back ten marks.)* Less ten marks. *(To the children.)* Always be glad you have a father who is willing to shoulder everything for his convictions. And you, Hella, as his eldest, should be his support. . . . And now the time has come to say goodbye. *(He offers his hand to Surkela. Surkela ignores it.)*

SURKELA: Come, Hella, we'll go home and pack. You've heard everything that's to be heard from Mr. Puntila. Come along. *(He leaves with his children.)*

PUNTILA *(deeply hurt):* My hand wasn't good enough for him. Did you notice how I waited for something from him when he said goodbye, just a word on his part? But nothing. For him the Estate is just like dirt. Rootless. His home means nothing to him. That's why I let him go when he insisted on it. *(He sits down.)* What a bitter experience. *(He drinks.)* You and I, we're different, Matti. You're a friend and guide along my steep path. I get thirsty just looking at you. How much do you get a month?

MATTI: Two hundred marks, Mr. Puntila.

PUNTILA: I'll raise you to two hundred and fifty, because I'm especially satisfied with you. *(Dreamily.)* Sometime, Matti, I'd like to climb up Mt. Hatelma with you, where there's a famous view, so I could show you the wonderful country we live in. You'll hit yourself on the head for never having realized it before. . . . Do you want to climb Mt. Hatelma now, Matti? It could be done. We could do it in spirit, so to speak. With a couple of chairs it would be easy.

MATTI: Anything you say, Mr. Puntila. I'll do anything you say as long as you're paying for it. I'll even build you a mountain in the middle of a valley.

PUNTILA: I'm not sure you have enough imagination.

(There is a pause. Matti remains silent.)

PUNTILA *(enthusiastically):* Build me a mountain, Matti! Don't spare yourself. Leave nothing untried. Take the biggest pieces of rock, or it will never be Mt. Hatelma — and we won't get our view!

MATTI: It'll all be done exactly the way you say, Mr. Puntila. *(Matti starts to pile all movable furniture — chairs, tables, grandfather clock — on top of the billiard table.)* Nobody should think of an eight-hour day if he's going to build Mr. Puntila a mountain in the middle of a valley.

PUNTILA: Take that chair there! You'll do best building Mt. Hatelma if you follow my orders. I know what has to be done and what doesn't. I have a sense of responsibility. *You'd* be building a mountain that wouldn't yield any profit! I wouldn't get any view, or enjoyment. You only care about having work, but I'm the one who has to lead it toward a useful purpose. . . . Now I've got to have a path up my mountain, so I can carry up my 200 pounds comfortably. Without a path, your mountain isn't worth a good crap. — You see? You don't think enough. . . . I know how to handle people, too. I'd like to know how you'd handle yourself without me.

(Matti tears out the doors of the gun-cabinet, and leans them against chairs to make an inclined path up the mountain for Puntila.)

MATTI: There you are. The mountain's ready. You can start climbing. It's a mountain with a path — in more usable condition than the ones God created in such a hurry, when He had only six days. . . . Afterwards, He had to create laborers, so you could get some good out of the mountains, Mr. Puntila.

PUNTILA *(beginning to climb):* I'll break my neck!

MATTI *(supporting Puntila):* You'd do the same thing on level ground if it weren't for me.

PUNTILA: That's why I'm taking you along, Matti; otherwise you'd never have a chance to see the beautiful land that gave you birth, and without which you'd be so much dirt. Be grateful to it.

MATTI: I'll be grateful to it until my dying day. But I don't know if that'll be enough, because I once read in the Helsinki *Herald* that you should keep on being grateful even after you're dead.

PUNTILA *(still climbing, supported by Matti):* First we see the fields and meadows, then the woods. The woods with their pines that can live in the rock on nothing at all. A man marvels at how they can live on so little.

MATTI: They'd make wonderful servants.

PUNTILA: We're climbing, Matti, we're going up! The buildings and structures built by man remain behind, and we push forward into pure nature, which now takes on a more severe aspect. Leave behind all your petty worries, Matti, and dedicate yourself to the grandeur of this experience.

MATTI: I'm doing my best, Mr. Puntila.

PUNTILA: Ah, thou blessed Tavastland! . . . *(To Matti.)* Let's have another drink out of the bottle, so we can appreciate all the beauty.

MATTI: Just a minute and I'll slide down the mountain and get it for you. *(He climbs down, and then back up again.)*

PUNTILA: I wonder if you can really see the beauty of this land. Are you from Tavastland?

MATTI: Yes.

PUNTILA: Let's do things in the right order. *(He takes a drink.)* That comes first. . . . Next, I ask you: Where have you ever seen anything like the Tavastland sky? I hear that in some other places the sky's bluer, but the clouds are finer spun here. The Finnish winds are more gentle, and I wouldn't want any other blue even if I could have it. And when the wild swans fly out of the marshes, and the air hums with their wings — is that nothing to you? Don't listen to big stories about other places, Matti. They're just a pack of lies. Stick to Tavastland. I'm giving you good advice.

MATTI: Yes, Mr. Puntila.

PUNTILA: The lakes alone! Forget about the woods if you want to — those over there are mine; the one on the point I'm having cut down — but think of the lakes! Just think of one or two of them — and don't even count the fish they're filled with! Just think of the way they look in the morning! That ought to be enough to keep you from going away and eating your heart out in foreign lands, and dying of longing. And we have eighty thousand lakes like that in Finland!

MATTI: All right. I'll think about the way they look, Mr. Puntila.

PUNTILA: You see that little tugboat with the bulldog-chest towing logs in the light of the dawn? How they float through the clear water, beautifully tied and stripped of bark, a small fortune. I can smell freshly felled lumber ten kilometers away; can you? What smells we have in Tavastland! They're a chapter in themselves. The berries, for instance. After the rain. And the leaves of the birch twigs you're beaten with after the steambath. . . . Where else in the world can you find a view like this?

MATTI: No place, Mr. Puntila.

PUNTILA: I like it best when it begins to get hazy. It's like moments in love when you half-close your eyes and everything gets dim. . . . You only find that kind of love in Tavastland.

MATTI: There were caves near the place I was born, with stones in front of them, round and polished like bowling balls.

PUNTILA: Oh, you'd crawl into the caves, wouldn't you? Instead of watching the cows. . . . *(Pointing.)* There are some cows there. They're swimming across the lake.

MATTI: I see them. There must be about fifty.

PUNTILA: Sixty, at least. . . . And there goes the train. When I listen sharply, I can hear the milk cans sloshing.

MATTI: *Very* sharply.

PUNTILA: I've still got to show you historic Tavastehus. We have cities, too! Over there I see the Park Hotel. They serve a good wine there; I can recommend it to you. . . . The castle, I'll pass over. They made a women's prison out of it for political offenders. Women shouldn't get themselves mixed up in politics. . . . But those steammills in the distance make a pretty picture. They give life to the landscape. . . . Now, what do you see to the left?

MATTI: . . . Well, what *do* I see?

PUNTILA: Fields! Fields are what you see as far as your eye can reach. And Puntila's fields are among them, especially the turf-land. The soil there is so rich that the cows I let into the clover can be milked three times a day, and the rye grows up to your chin twice a year. . . Let's sing!

"And the waves of the beautiful Ruona
Are kissing the milk white sand."

(Fina and the Cook come in.)

FINA: Heavens!

COOK: They've ruined everything!

MATTI: We're on top of Mt. Hatelma, enjoying the view.

PUNTILA: Everybody sing! Where's your patriotism?

(They all sing but Matti.)

ALL THREE: "And the waves of the beautiful Ruona
Are kissing the milk white sand."

PUNTILA: O Tavastland, blessed above all! With your sky — your lakes — your people — and your woods! *(To Matti.)* Go on, say your heart opens wide when you see all that.

MATTI: My heart opens wide when I see your woods, Mr. Puntila.

DAVID W. EVANS:

T. S. Eliot, Charles Williams, and the Sense of the Occult

Comparisons, like generalities, are dangerous, which may be why more attention has not been accorded the relationship between the work of T. S. Eliot and that of the late Charles Williams. When they met in 1927, both men were a part of the checkered literary life of London, Williams as a staff member of the Oxford Press, Eliot as editor of *The Criterion*. By 1930 Williams was acknowledging Eliot as one of the few living poets who had "extended the frontiers of English verse." Both men became champions of Christian orthodoxy, a part of the little renaissance in religious writing that began to flower in the thirties. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* was presented as the Canterbury Festival play for 1935, and, in the following year, Williams' *Cranmer* was accorded the same honor. Before his death in 1945 Williams, who was two years older than Eliot, had published twice as much as his more famous contemporary: plays, literary criticism, theological discussions, a volume on Dante's Beatrice, a book on witchcraft, and much poetry, including an unfinished cycle of poems drawn from the "matter of Britain," the Grail story, and the Arthurian legends, subjects to which he had devoted a lifetime of scholarly exploration. He had also published seven novels, which did not appear in America till after his death. For one of these, *All Hallows' Eve,* Eliot wrote a preface in which he paid warm personal tribute to Williams and to their long friendship.

The affinity between Eliot and Williams, however, does not rest primarily on friendship, nor does it have much to do with their respective positions in the world of letters. Williams was a facile writer; that he will be remembered as a great one is arguable. In *Poetry and Personal Responsibility,* a little book published in England, George Every gives him stature with Eliot and speaks in general terms of "mutual influences," but F. R. Leavis decries this judgment. According to Dr. Leavis, in his latest collection of essays, *The Common Pursuit,* Williams lacked maturity and in his "preoccupation with the 'horror of evil' " seemed a case of arrested development.

Eliot himself felt that what Williams "had to say was beyond his resources. . . ."

Williams, nevertheless, was a writer of wit and distinction, and his novels, in particular, are literate studies in the subtleties of ambiguity. He had an audacious imagination and an extraordinary gift for invention. Fantastic concepts provided him with plots. In *The Place of the Lion,* the Platonic archetypal Ideas emerge from the realm of the intellect to become living and terrifying entities. In *War in Heaven,* the Holy Grail appears in modern England to become the focal point for an apocalyptic struggle between forces of Good and Evil. In *The Greater Trumps,* the ancient and mysterious deck of playing cards known as the Tarot becomes the center of a similar struggle. Williams' novels, preoccupied with morality, with Good and Evil, Heaven and Hell, and the soul's progress toward salvation or damnation, are, in a sense, doctrinal tracts, just as Eliot's plays are moralities.

Williams was first, however, a writer bent on intriguing his readers, as well as instructing them. Eliot has compared him with such practitioners of horror as M. R. James, A. E. Coppard, even Stevenson, Henry James, and Poe. The novels are crowded with adepts and elementals, with witches and warlocks. The dead walk with the living. The aging peer may be the devil's advocate; the young man in the grey suit, Prester John; the girl in the outer office, a shade from the underworld. But Williams had a little of Kafka's knack for making the unreal seem momentarily real, and the action of these novels is under sunny English skies in placidly normal surroundings — normal until a fog, a mist, an odor, a summer storm, or the rumbling of the earth portends some new manifestation of the supernatural. Dr. Leavis has said that Williams' novels belong to "the ethos of the thriller." In one sense, they are second cousins to the "entertainments" of Graham Greene. But after the alarums and excursions, the suspense and adventure of the chase, the impression remains that Williams has managed to convey in these novels, in spite of their melodrama, something profound — and a little disquieting.

It is in his novels, then, that Williams' affinity to Eliot comes nearest to revealing itself. In his book, *The T. S. Eliot Myth,* C. S. Robbins has traced Eliot's play, *The Cocktail Party,* to Williams' novel, *Descent into Hell.* Certain turns of phrase in the play are, in fact, suggestive of the novel, and the use in both of a passage from

Prometheus Unbound, the lines about the magus Zoroaster meeting his own image walking in a garden, is startling. In *Descent into Hell,* however, the quotation is central to the plot: Williams' heroine does meet her own image, which is variously identified as an other self or the conscience. In *The Cocktail Party* the passage is not used with such nicety and is given only subsidiary value. Harcourt-Reilly, seeing a vision of the heroine, Celia, appear behind her at their first meeting, knows she is marked for a martyr's death, and, in referring to this later, he quotes the lines from Shelley. Mr. Robbins discovers certain other resemblances, but these, also, are open to qualification. The novel, like the play, posits two courses of individual action, but to say that the themes are similar is to stretch the point. In *Descent into Hell* salvation is achieved through the voluntary bearing of another's burden, specifically the burden of another's fears. As his title implies, however, Williams is as much concerned with the "descent into Hell." A very real descent into a very real Hell, this comes about through the sin of self-love, the sin of the inhabitants of Gomorrah, which results in the slow decay of the soul. Either of Williams' alternatives, salvation or damnation, is a matter of individual choice. If Eliot is concerned with Hell in *The Cocktail Party,* certainly there is no choice. Only a few are capable of martyrdom; the rest must be content with getting on, muddling through, "making the best of the mess we have made. . . ."

As for character, Peter Stanhope, the retiring protagonist of *Descent into Hell,* is a sharer of burdens, almost the antithesis of Eliot's ubiquitous Reilly, who offers much advice but little else. Both have the gift of enlightenment, but enlightenment is not a rationed commodity, even in modern literature. Charles Williams occasionally wrote under the pseudonym of Peter Stanhope, but in the novel his portrait of Stanhope, the successful poet-dramatist, whose poetry combines great art with the humility of wisdom, suggests T. S. Eliot himself rather than Eliot's omnipotent stranger. Mrs. Sammile, another character in *Descent into Hell,* whom Mr. Robbins identifies with the Julia Shuttlethwaite of Eliot's play, is a reincarnation of Lilith, the primordial daughter of evil, tempting her victims to their own destruction with the fruits of illusion. Whatever is to be said of the meddlesome Julia, she is at least on the side of the angels. But dowager English ladies of high breeding, both intelligent and a bit stupid, who are gifted or afflicted as the case may be with second sight, and who

act as special emissaries, messengers, or guardians for the powers from beyond — characters such as Agatha in *The Family Reunion* and Julia in *The Cocktail Party* — are standard types in Williams' novels. Julia, for instance, could be identified with as much precision with Sybil, one of the women in *The Greater Trumps*. In this novel, as in all of his work, Williams explored the shadowy region between religion, reality, and myth, and linked the past with the present. In terms much less profound, but for that reason more readily understood, he touched on the concepts of time and space and mortality which Eliot developed with greater technical virtuosity in *Four Quartets*. The playing cards of the Tarot appear in *The Greater Trumps*, in one manifestation, as carved golden figures imbued with a life of their own, moving ceaselessly in the figure of the dance. This treatment of the dance, only partly the dance of the atoms and the movement of creation, is a forceful reminder of Eliot's use of the concept in "Burnt Norton": "At the still point, there the dance is . . . / Where past and future are foregathered." And again: "Except for the point, the still point, / There would be no dance, and there is only the dance."

It is not wise to press such parallels too far. Their significance is more apparent than real, the shadow rather than the substance of the bond between Eliot and Williams. Neither writer is dependent on the other in any discriminating sense of the word, but they shared a sympathy of outlook. While writing in the Christian tradition, they refused to allow the mind to be fettered by that tradition. Aside from the purely orthodox element in their work, then, the community of interest between them displays itself strikingly in their recognition and acceptance of occult symbolism. Williams, of course, was fascinated by the supernatural, the esoteric; it was, so to speak, his stock in trade. Eliot's interest, never openly enthusiastic, has been restrained and fastidiously selective. Yet the sense of the occult is firmly imbedded in his writing, so firmly imbedded that to dislodge it might be to bring the whole structure tumbling down.

When *The Waste Land* was first published and Eliot in the notes acknowledged his debt to Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*, only F. L. Lucas, among the critics, pointed out that Miss Weston was "clearly" a Theosophist and the poem itself might be a Theosophical tract. Before this opinion is dismissed as folly, it should be remembered that Theosophy was as prevalent in the early part of the century as Existentialism, for instance, a few years ago. With

at least as valid a basis as Sartre's philosophy, the religion which Madame Blavatsky founded was similarly ridiculed in many quarters and it exerted, in its way, a similar influence. It drew heavily on the wisdom of the East and, though steeped in the occult, was in effect a tepid reinvigoration of the same transcendentalism which flourished under Emerson. Presumably it might have been expected to appeal to a poet whose cultural roots lay in New England, even if he saw in it only the debased present echoing the magnificent past. In any event, Eliot, who has been neglected as a social historian, saw fit to perpetuate the memory of the founder of Theosophy in "A Cooking Egg," and, as conjecture only, one wonders if Madame Blavatsky, who once really was considered "the wisest woman in Europe," might not prove a more fascinating guide to *The Waste Land* than either Weston or Frazer.

A journey through *Isis Unveiled* or *The Secret Doctrine* is not needed, however, to demonstrate the play of the supernatural in Eliot's poetry. A closer look at his use of the Tarot in *The Waste Land* (ten years, incidentally, before Williams wrote *The Greater Trumps)* may suffice. With other trappings of the occult, the Tarot remains outside the pale of recognized scholarship, and its origins, whether in China or India or Egypt, are lost in antiquity. As a deck of cards, it is the forerunner of our modern playing cards, but it is more than that. How it got to Europe, how it was used by the gypsies in divination, how it has survived throughout the centuries as one of the stranger manifestations of the mind of man are questions for the antiquary. It is now, at any rate, thoroughly encrusted with that kind of tradition which is so dear to Eliot and was so dear to Williams. Reputedly it is a compendium of all esoteric knowledge for those who hold the keys. Reputedly it contains all the wisdom of the universe, including the secret of the still point.

Without Eliot's notes to *The Waste Land,* the use of the Tarot in the structure of the poem might have assumed a major importance in critical discussion. The open references to the Hanged Man and the Wheel of Fortune, of course, suggested the trump cards of the Tarot pack. In the extensive cultivation of *The Waste Land,* efforts to search out more guarded references and to read into the poem some of the design which tradition attaches to the cards would not have been surprising. Eliot successfully forestalled such efforts, however, by admitting to an unfamiliarity with the cards which seemed to minimize their importance. His unfamiliarity, indeed, may explain why

he chose to associate a very humble member of the suit cards, the Man with Three Staves, with the extremely important figure of the Fisher King. Aside from its twenty-two trump cards, the Tarot, like the modern deck of cards, is composed of four suits: Cups, Swords, Coins, and Staves. The Man with Three Staves is merely the figure appearing on the three of that suit. In Arthur Edward Waite's *Pictorial Key to the Tarot,* he is shown as a man with his back turned looking out from a cliff over a sea on which ships are seen. Waite envisions him as a wealthy merchant watching his argosies returning home, and if Eliot had been familiar with Waite, an association with Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant, might have been in order. Waite himself, however, violates the proprieties, inasmuch as Coins, not Staves, were supposed to be representative of the merchant class in the Tarot, as Swords were of the nobility, Cups or Chalices of the church, and Wands or Staves of agriculture.

Staves is the only suit to which Eliot makes direct reference. In *From Ritual to Romance,* Miss Weston devotes some pages to the Tarot, but she calls this suit Wands or Batons, not Staves. It seems likely, then, that Eliot did not obtain his information, however rudimentary, from her. Nor did Sir James Frazer provide a source, since the Tarot plays no part in *The Golden Bough.* The library of any thorough-going Theosophist, on the other hand, might have furnished him with material. Madame Batavsky was supposedly much influenced by Eliphas Levi, the great French magus of the nineteenth century and major authority on the Tarot.

In any event, Eliot had some knowledge of the cards, and enough of it is displayed in *The Waste Land* to indicate that he was somewhat better informed than his brief note would suggest. What seem to be oblique references to the cards in the poem are difficult to ignore. In attempting to explain why Eliot altered Webster's line — "But keep the wolf far thence that's foe to man" — to read, "Oh keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men," critics have so far not speculated on the fact that, oddly enough, the dog and the wolf appear together on the thirteenth trump, the Moon card of the Tarot. Demanding even more the attention of future critics is the sixteenth trump card of the Tarot, known as the Tower, or the Tower Struck by Lightning. On it two figures are shown plunging to destruction as lightning strikes the capstone. The figures have been variously identified (such is the uncertain nature of knowledge about the Tarot) as man and woman and as king and commoner. In *The Greater*

Trumps Charles Williams visualizes the Tower as never quite being destroyed but continually resurrecting or reforming itself. Such is the way the falling towers of Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria, Vienna, and London are presented in *The Waste Land:*

> What is the city over the mountains
> Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
> Falling towers . . .

Portraits on the earliest Tarots occupied the whole card, but one later version makes use of the double-headed design familiar on modern cards. On the lower half of the sixteenth trump in this pack, the Tower appears in an inverted position like Eliot's towers "upside down in air . . . / Tolling reminiscent bells."

Madame Sosostris is dismissed, in most studies of *The Waste Land,* as a charlatan, one more representative of the general sterility of the times. Her manipulation of the "wicked pack of cards" is treated lightly, and the cards themselves, conventional window-dressing in the shoddiest of fortune-telling establishments, are accorded relatively scant attention. The Tarot, however, is capable of exercising a strong fascination upon a receptive mind. Like *The Waste Land,* it is susceptible of interpretations on many levels, and from it emanates a quality of intangible mystery, which is the hallmark of Eliot's poem. Whatever his feeling toward Madame Sosostris may have been, then, it does not necessarily follow that Eliot was being cynical in his treatment of the cards. The probability, indeed, is that he was consciously indulging his sense of the supernatural. To think otherwise is to ignore the wealth of meaning which attaches to the cards and seems to echo throughout the poem, and, incidentally, to overlook the irony that Madame Sosostris, charlatan or not, prophesies correctly, as in the warning of death by water.

The implications of Tarotology in *The Waste Land,* however, intriguing as they are, are not more intriguing than implications of the occult elsewhere in Eliot's work. Ritual and incantation seem to have become standard equipment in the plays, and the poetry is shot through with celestial imagery: "constellated wars," the "horned moon," the "shuddering Bear," "gloomy Orion and the Dog." The action of *Sweeney Agonistes* consists, in substantial measure, of trying "to riddle the inevitable / With playing cards. . . ." A variegated catalogue of superstitions opens Section V of "The Dry Salvages," and *Four Quartets* as a whole provides an elaborate symbolization

of the Tetragrammaton, the mystical sign of the four, including the ancient elements of earth, air, fire, and water, which stems, more or less directly, from the Kabala.

Eliot, to be sure, has viewed the supernatural with an eye to its suspect reputation in the world. More than Charles Williams, he has shown an awareness of the fraud, imposture, and quackery which so often surround it. He has even gently satirized the delusions of those who attempt to "communicate with Mars, converse with spirits . . . release omens / By sortilege, or tea leaves . . ." — as once he satirized the Church in "The Hippopotamus." But heterodox tradition can be as powerful and compelling as any other, and this, which began before Saul visited the Witch of Endor, which includes the names of the notorious and the noted alike, Apollonius of Tyana and Dr. Dee, Cagliostro and Mesmer, Saint-Germain and Madame Blavatsky, which has even attained a certain respectability under the name of psychic research, is a rich and various tradition. That Eliot should have entered the vast storehouse of this dark wisdom, found himself there in amiable company with Charles Williams and, together with Williams, been enchanted should surprise no one. Nor is it necessary, to paraphrase Coleridge, to weave a circle round them thrice and close our eyes with holy dread. Eliot and Williams were not the first to tap this vein for literature, and it is not likely that they will be the last.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, and JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233)

Of ACCENT, published quarterly at Urbana, Illinois, for October, 1953.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, and business manager are: Kerker Quinn, Charles Shattuck, and George Scouffas, all of Box 102, University Station, Urbana, Illinois.

2. The owners are: Kerker Quinn, Charles Shattuck, and George Scouffas, all of Box 102, University Station, Urbana, Illinois.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

KERKER QUINN (Editor)

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 28th day of October, 1953.

KATHERINE H. PEER, Notary Public
(My commission expires November 19, 1953)

JAMES HAFLEY:

A Message for the Hounds

VIRGINIA WOOLF: *A Writer's Diary.* Edited by Leonard Woolf. Harcourt, Brace.

Shortly after Virginia Woolf's death in 1941, T. S. Eliot pronounced her "an author of unquestionable importance [who] has received due tribute, and is not in the slightest danger of being overlooked or belittled." This estimate is amusing only if one supposes Eliot to have been near-sighted, or forgets the temporary misunderstanding and oblivion through which many currently acknowledged masterworks have moved in their day. It is not quite so difficult to hear Virginia Woolf discussed as an elegant-so-intelligent lady novelist with a talent for evoking charming but dated atmosphere, when one recalls the things that were said about Donne — or even Dante — in the eighteenth century.

Nevertheless it is difficult enough; and I should like to be able to think that the appearance of this volume would mark a turning-point toward adequate recognition of one of our indispensable novelists. If I cannot, that is only because Leonard Woolf, choosing excerpts from the twenty-six volumes of the diary proper, has selected too much of what will please admirers of Virginia Woolf's "prose style" — descriptions of icicles and summer meadows — and admittedly passed over too much of that material which the reader who intends to study her art will find invaluable, such as her personal comments upon many of the books she read. It is difficult to believe, for example, that she wrote about Proust — who was perhaps her most important single influence — only as briefly as is indicated here; even her frequent mentions of him in the critical essays are more excited, and more exciting, than the perfunctory sentences given from the diary. (On the other hand, her admiration for Gide is made explicit for the first time.) Mr. Woolf believes *The Waves* to be "far and away the greatest of her books," and it is the Virginia Woolf of that distinguished but particularly limited work — or, rather, the popular conception of that Virginia Woolf — whom he has chosen to place in the foreground. The total artist, the one who wrote *The Years,* for instance, is naturally there to be found; but as Mr. Woolf himself warns repeatedly: "the reader must remember that what is printed in this volume is only a very small portion of the diaries and that the extracts were embedded in a mass of matter unconnected with Virginia Woolf's writing. Unless this is constantly borne in mind, the book will give a very distorted view of her life and her character."

The same kind of distorted view, it may be added, as that which Professor Blackstone has achieved in his examination of the novels, and one that Virginia Woolf's denunciation of Katherine Mansfield's *Bliss* is almost by itself enough to discredit. Anyone accustomed to lumping these two writers together should consider that denunciation, because it provides a fine basis for readjustment to Virginia Woolf's actual achievement:

> I shall have to accept the fact, I'm afraid, that her mind is a very thin soil, laid an inch or two deep upon very barren rock. For *Bliss* is long enough to give her a chance of going deeper. Instead she is content with

> superficial smartness; and the whole conception is poor, cheap, not the vision, however imperfect, of an interesting mind. She writes badly too.

The critical intelligence exhibited here is the same one at work in Virginia Woolf's best novels; and it is to be seen in *The Waves* as well, once one is conscious of its existence. To regard Virginia Woolf's stories as companion-pieces to *Bliss* is to neglect completely the accomplishment of this intelligence. And even the distempered onslaughts of the critics Leavis, those stiff twin compasses, are preferable to irresponsible adulation of Virginia Woolf's art for all the wrong reasons. Limpid prose, fragile evocation, delicate limning of the feminine mind — these and other such insubstantial phrases have obscured for a time those qualities of moral and artistic penetration to the center of theme after complex theme which give her art its true significance, and to which the beautiful prose is simply one means.

Discrete adornment of any nature is exactly what Virginia Woolf worked to overcome, as the diary verifies. She notes with satisfaction that *The Years* has no "beautiful writing," and also recognizes that "one strata [sic] or layer can't be developed intensively, as I did I expect in *The Waves,* without harm to the others. Thus, a kind of form is, I hope, imposing itself, corresponding to the dimensions of the human being." That was the progress of her ability as artist: first to discard whatever distorted or impaired a true account of her subject; then to render the account in such a way that "I; and the not I; and the outer and the inner" — the "four dimensions" of human experience — attained to classic balance. With *To the Lighthouse* she realized fully, and perfectly, the first stage of this progress; with her last two novels she arrived at the sort of goal that Jane Austen reached in *Emma* and, I think, Faulkner in *Absalom, Absalom!* This is a goal, of course, that some first-rate novelists (George Eliot) have never reached, and that some very good novelists (Dickens) have never heard of.

It would be foolish, however, to refuse to admit the several limitations common to many of Virginia Woolf's novels — and the diary illustrates them all. Of these, her occasional tendency to overwrite, take the easy way out of manipulating a situation, is among the most serious. But this fault is certainly no more destructive than its reverse in George Eliot; and it is with novelists like George Eliot — or Faulkner and Lawrence in her own period — that Virginia Woolf can best be compared, strange as that may appear in light of such criticism as has been mentioned. Little wonder that, in the diary, Virginia Woolf is so grateful to those commentators who have taken her seriously, worked towards her meaning; little wonder also that she heaps scorn upon the reviews which have gone into Longinian rapture over her "poetry."

> And Miss Holtby says "It is a poem, more completely than any of your other books, of course. It is most rarely subtle. It has seen more deeply into the human heart, perhaps, than even *To the Lighthouse* . . ." and though I copy the sentence, because it is in the chart of my temperature, Lord, as I say, that temperature which was deathly low this time last week and then fever high, doesn't rise: is normal. I suppose I'm safe; I think people can only repeat. And I've forgotten so much. What I want is to be told that this is solid and means something. What it means I myself shan't know till I write another book. And I'm the hare, a long way ahead of the hounds my critics.

Surely such remarks as this — and one would like to cite all of them, in italics — must give pause to our general attitude, or lack of attitude, about Virginia Woolf as artist. Her work *is* solid; it *does* mean something. But for every reader who has studied the novels, and read the distinguished explications of critics like Warren Beck and John Graham, there are dozens who take for granted such sentiment as that just quoted, and to whom the idea of *The Waves* as a serious artistic examination of something more than "the human heart" suggests is therefore a joke. Yet common sense should tell us that Virginia Woolf cannot be both pessimist and rhapsodist, surface-skimmer and stream-of-consciousness diver — that these conflicting valuations clash into so much powder. (No critic who writes hereafter can be condoned for repetition of the distorting commonplace about her having employed stream-of-consciousness technique, by the way: her own phrase, "oratio obliqua," with all its implications of the sharp, flexible tool modulating moral discords into responsible harmony, shatters that mirror once for all.)

Aside from its unmistakable confirmations of Virginia Woolf's high seriousness as artist, this diary offers nothing more enjoyable than the record of her struggle with *The Years,* a struggle involving the incorporation of her new techniques with the form of the novel proper, to produce her masterpiece (now generally laid aside as a "return to convention," alas). How she composed and revised during six years; how she winced at even thinking of the brilliant air-raid scene, which gave her so much anguish before it was achieved; how, torn between feelings of complete success and complete failure, she finally thrust the manuscript at her husband to burn, and then ran from the house for a long, bitter walk; how, after Leonard Woolf had persuaded her to publish it, she was alternately elated and depressed by the opinions of her friends — all this is worthy of the book itself as a dramatic record of its creation. Afterwards, exhausted by "that awful burden," she wrote: "I am doubtful if I shall ever write another novel. Certainly not unless under great compulsion such as *The Years* inspired in me."

To be sure, this episode has marginal interest only: it is the sensibility which is required now, and not the personality — attractive and powerful as that can be. And it is to the sensibility that one must return, if the diary is to have more than casual appeal. Such concentration is not, as I have said, an easy job; the editing is neither impartial nor partial to a sound conception of Virginia Woolf's merit. Further, such things as her grossly erratic response to *Ulysses* — "a queasy undergraduate scratching his pimples" — are apt to get in the way of a fair response to the diarist. I do not mean that you have to minimize the faults; but you must, as in reading the novels themselves, measure the faults with a reasonable sense of perspective: Virginia Woolf's dissatisfaction with *The Wings of the Dove,* which seems to me perfectly just, neutralizes her inability to fathom Joyce, as far as the operation of her intelligence upon her own materials is concerned. And her distrust of herself is far more stringent than her distrust of others, so that each novel takes notice of what is wrong and what is right with the one before it. Of *The Waves,* she writes again: "I think I have just done what I meant; of course I have altered the scheme considerably; but my feeling is that I have insisted upon saying, by hook or by crook, certain things I meant to say. I imagine that the hookedness may be so great that it will be a failure from a reader's point of view. Well, never mind: it is a brave

attempt. I think, something struggled for." And so she is able to write *The Years* and *Between the Acts.* Earlier, she finds the meaning of *Mrs. Dalloway* by criticizing it with her creation of *To the Lighthouse.* When one remembers that she did this on her own — while cries of Humbug! and Exquisite! flapped around her head — one returns to the novels themselves with an increased sense of awe: she was her own *miglior fabbro,* and the examination of her attempts reveals the same quality, though of course not to nearly the same degree, as the contemplation of her attainments. It is because this diary, even in its present form, allows and encourages such an examination that one reads it with rich enjoyment.

"And I'm the hare, a long way ahead of the hounds my critics." Since this is true, and the chase — if the hounds will only take the scent and start running — so exhilarating even in anticipation, one need not worry about the reputation of Virginia Woolf's novels: the hare will not be caught, will not be cornered. Eliot's observation quoted at the beginning of this review is actually correct despite its apparent incongruity at the present time. No one needs to defend these novels; but a good many of us will wish that we could defend ourselves when contemporary opinion begins to receive the treatment that it has so loudly invited.

CONTRIBUTORS

ISABEL BAYLEY, until recently publicity director at the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo, now lives in New York City. "The Great White Owl" is Mrs. Bayley's first published story.

BERTOLT BRECHT is the most widely produced and influential of living German dramatists. *The Three-Penny Opera, Galileo, The Private Life of the Master Race,* and *The Good Woman of Setzuan* are among his plays familiar to American audiences.

DAVID W. EVANS lives in South Gate, California. Another of his articles on Eliot will soon appear in the *Toronto Quarterly.*

RICHARD GRENIER, co-translator of *Puntila,* studied at Harvard and is now writing in Paris.

JAMES HAFLEY teaches modern fiction at the Catholic University of America. *The Glass Roof,* his book of Virginia Woolf, will be published later this year.

PETER HANKE is an Ensign on the U. S. S. Princeton in the Pacific.

RICHARD F. HUGO works for the Boeing Airplane Co. in Seattle. His poems have appeared in *Epoch, Perspective,* and ACCENT.

GERHARD NELLHAUS, whose translations of Brecht have been in ACCENT and other magazines, has lived in America since 1936. He has an M. A. in Comparative Literature from Harvard, and is studying medicine at Western Reserve University.

DAVID MELVIN PAUL, an Ensign on active duty in the Pentagon, has published poems in *Opus,* the *Chicago Review,* etc.

RALPH ROBIN of Washington, D. C. has contributed stories to ACCENT, the *Yale Review,* etc., and is at work on an historical novel.

WILLIAM JAY SMITH is the author of *Celebration at Dark,* a book of poems. The Grove Press will soon issue his translation of selected poems of Laforgue.

IRVIN STOCK, Associate Professor of English at Rollins College, has recently completed a book-length study of William Hale White.

PARKER TYLER, well-known poet and writer on films, is working on *The Clairvoyante,* a novel in prose and verse.

A TREASURY OF THE '40'S

1. ACCENT ANTHOLOGY:

A 687-page selection from Volumes I-V (1940-45) containing such otherwise unavailable works as

Eudora Welty: Ida M'Toy
Delmore Schwartz: Edmund Wilson
Otis Ferguson: American Film Comedy
Katherine Anne Porter: Cotton Mather
James Hanley: Fancy Free
Harry Levin: Laforgue's 'Two Pigeons'
T. Weiss: Gerard Manley Hopkins
Henry Miller: Lautreamont
F. O. Matthiessen: Katherine Anne Porter
Cleanth Brooks: Empson's Criticism
Richard Eberhart: Empson's Poetry
Kay Boyle: Cairo Street
Arthur Mizener: Ideas in Auden
Roger Martin du Gard: Confidence Africaine
Jack Jones: The Mugging
Wallace Fowlie: Eliot and Tchelitchew
David Daiches: Problems for Modern Novelists
Gilbert Neiman: Kermess

And notable contributions by R. P. Blackmur, Dylan Thomas, E. E. Cummings, Henry Treece, Richard Wright, W. Y. Tindall, Eric Bentley, Kenneth Burke, Yvan Goll, Walter Van Tilburg Clark, Jean Garrigue, Marguerite Young, Wallace Stevens, Nicholas Moore, Horace Gregory, Robert Fitzgerald, Muriel Rukeyser, J. F. Powers—and many younger writers.

2. 17 BACK ISSUES:

From Volumes VI-X (1946-50)—more than 1000 pages—containing such otherwise unavailable work as

Katherine Anne Porter: The Strangers
Bertolt Brecht: Three Short Plays
Austin Warren: Vachel Lindsay
Warren Carrier: Lorca
A. M. Klein: Joyce's Black Mass
Reginald L. Cook: Frost as Parablist
S. E. Hyman: John Peale Bishop
Wallace Fowlie: Eluard
Klaus Mann: Dream-America
Arthur Mizener: Tate's 'The Fathers'
Eudora Welty: Put Me in the Sky!
Italo Svevo: The Mother
Irvin Stock: Gide's 'Theseus'
Flannery O'Connor: The Geranium
Hugo von Hofmannsthal: The Tale of the 672nd Night
Frajam Taylor: Keats and Crane
Robert B. Heilman: Hardy and Waugh

And notable contributions by William Sansom, Francis Fergusson, J. F. Powers, Caroline Gordon, Odysseus Elytis, William Carlos Williams, Louis Aragon, R. V. Cassill, Mina Loy, Margaret Webster, Vernon Young, James Merrill, E. E. Cummings, Wallace Stevens, J. W. Beach, Kenneth Burke, Jo Sinclair, Pablo Neruda, Boris Pasternak—and many younger writers.

ACCENT ANTHOLOGY (Harcourt, Brace) — $4.00
17 BACK ISSUES, totalling — $5.50

BOTH FOR $6.00

(a saving of $3.50)